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A SUMMER

AMONGST THE

BOCAGES AND THE VINES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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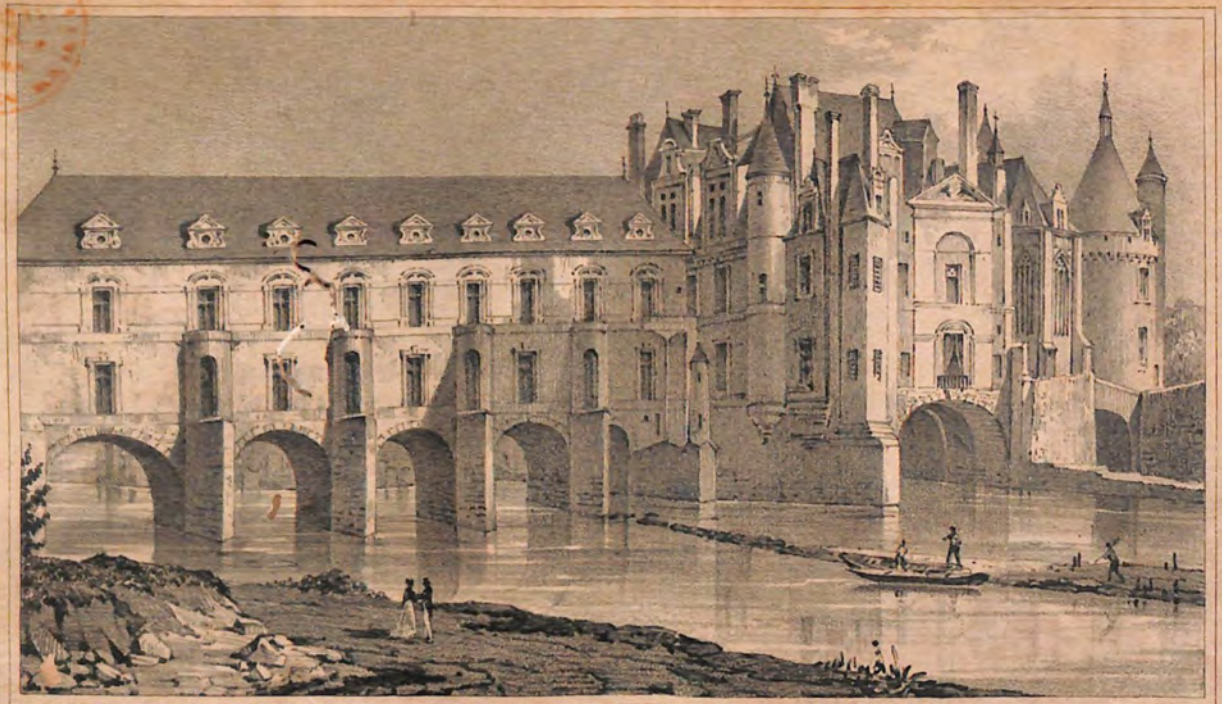

CHATEAU de CHENONCEAUX on the CHER.

A SUMMER

AMONGST THE

BOCAGES AND THE VINES.

BY

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO.

AUTHOR OF

"SPECIMENS OF THE EARLY POETRY OF FRANCE."

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"La Nature se joue du pinceau des hommes: lorsqu'on croit qu'il a atteint sa plus grande beauté, elle sourit et s'embellit encore."

AUDUBON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE

BOCAGES AND THE VINES.

CHAPTER I.

Fontevraud.—The Vintage of 1834.—Habits of the Vignerons.—Tintamarre.—Warnings.—The way to Fontevraud.—The Abbey.—Tombs of the Kings.—Cœur de Lion.—Henry and Elionore.—Isabella of Angoulême.—Church.—Dampierre.—Queen Margaret.—Candes.—Rochecotte.—Road to Chinon.—The happy Conducteur.—The Malle Poste.—The Castle Height.—The Market-place.—The Arrival.

SUDDEN showers intermingled with occasional snatches of brilliant sunshine, divided the morning, until the latter at length predominated, when, disregarding the prognostics of our hostess of the Ecu de Bretagne, who insisted upon it that it would rain, we ordered a cabriolet and prepared to set out for the tomb

of the English Kings. As soon as it was discovered that our intention was to return, we were assured on all hands that the weather was sure to be propitious, and, in fact, was made on purpose: indeed, so it seemed; for nothing could be more brilliant and beautiful than it continued during the whole of our charming drive, and, perhaps, one more lovely it would be impossible to find in any part of France.

The river is here remarkably fine, and the *coteaux* rise in graceful forms on the other side of the excellent road; the curious fairy dwellings in the caves, continue for leagues, placed at all heights and distances, and festooned with grape-vines and shaded with acacia, birch, and flowering shrubs: here and there a dwelling of fantastic shape is seen perched on a shelf of rock which forms its back ground; its ornamentally draped windows and brightly painted doors, singularly contrasting with its mysterious situation: many of the rich *bourgeois* have country houses, a league or two from the town, to which, during the summer, they retire after the business of the day is over, and there enjoy a delightful repose, not unaccompanied by visitors and friends.

At intervals, between these ranges of troglo-

dyte habitations, extend rich vineyards, where some of the most precious growth of wine is produced: here are the *coteaux* of Champigny, Savigny, and a host of others, whose wines are highly esteemed and seldom allowed to leave the country.

All along this luxuriant range of hills every inch of ground is golden, and our driver expatiated with great *goût* on the perfection of their delicious produce. "Here," he said, "in the great year, never to be forgotten in a wine country, 1834, these vineyards were one mass of the richest grapes: so excellent was their quality and so over abundant the vintage, that the lowest-priced wine for the poorest people was equal to that charged a franc a bottle in other years: unfortunately many abused this advantage, and much sickness was the consequence: to be sure it was difficult to avoid being affected by the wine even though every one drank as usual, for a very different result ensued, one glass being as strong as a dozen of ordinary." This man, who was extremely intelligent, told us some curious particulars of the customs and manners of the vignerons, who are a class quite apart from others; they are rich, industrious,

sober, and respectable: keeping strictly to their own habits, marrying amongst themselves, and being altogether distinguished from their neighbours.

A master vigneron, after his vintage is completed, and the husks of the grapes alone left, has boiling water poured upon them, and filling casks with this, allows the mixture to ferment until a drink is procured which is the strongest that either he or his men ever indulge in: they are never known to be intoxicated, or to exceed in any way the bounds of temperance; they are good masters, and honest in all their dealings: like the Bretons, they have peculiar and not very gallant notions with respect to the weaker sex.

The women are so attached to their cows that they appear to feel an equal affection towards them and their children, and on the death of one their lamentations know no bounds: the men consider it beneath them to attend to the cattle, as they look on them as peculiarly the women's charge, who are also offended at being interfered with; nor do they, as in many parts of France, meddle with their husband's department, the care of the horses.

A master of a family always addresses his wife by the familiar style of *tu* and *toi*, but she never forgets his superior dignity so much as to return his salutation but by using the ceremonious pronoun *vous:* the master and his sons take precedence of the mistress and the other females of the establishment; all the family, even to the lowest servants, dine at the same board in the Saxon style, with a divided part for the master, and all partake of the same very homely food, consisting of black bread and bacon. Before they separate, the master and mistress drink between them one small glass of *real* wine as a kind of grace cup to the rest, who then disperse to their occupations; the mistress sometimes eats white bread in case of illness.

As with every other class, however, innovations are creeping in amongst them, and many of their customs are disappearing by degrees; they marry more with strangers, and learn to laugh at many of their old prejudices, nor do the families separate themselves so exclusively from the tradesmen of the town as formerly. They are not in general long-lived, for it is a very fatiguing employment, and the necessity

for stooping draws their figures strangely out of the perpendicular — sometimes it is painful to behold persons, not particularly aged, literally bent double and apparently walking on all fours! A French author, who had travelled in the southern wine countries, describes the hardships of this life in the following manner, and adds a few particulars respecting a well-known French expression, which will scarcely be considered out of place here.

"There is no culture so hard as that of the vine; no fruit more uncertain, nor which the earth yields with more regret, as if she wished to conceal the excess of her own fruitfulness. It is singular how men condemn themselves to an existence which, if forced on them, would be considered an intolerable hardship. All these ridges planted with vine plants, are cultivated by men necessarily bent to the earth: at the age of sixty they can only walk quite bent double. From the manufacturer to the vine-dresser, all sedentary or painful occupations, obliges the race to live degenerated and deformed. Each species of labour has an influence on morals; the labourer is attached to the soil, but the vine-dresser is to other cultivators what

the cat is to other domestic animals: he is not more attached to the master than to the house: more independent than the ploughman, he is less peaceful. His state is much the same in all countries where the vine is cultivated. It has frequently been to me a matter of surprise why the handle of the vine-knife or *mare*, as it is called in the south, should not be longer, this would but little diminish its power, and would be a great advantage to the health of the labourer."

I do not think that at present the instrument used to dress the vines is called on the Loire a *mare;* I have heard it called *serpe*, and am not aware if the old word, which was formerly used at Blois, is still in vogue: the author above quoted proceeds to give a curious definition of the term *tintamarre*, to express "a noise, riot, calling together"— a "*charivari en effet.*"

"After the hours allotted to repose amongst all workmen, when the time is come to resume their duties, it is customary with the vinedressers to strike on their implements of labour, *tinter à la marre*, to call their companions together. In many instances bells do this office, and the proprietors of some of the largest vineyards have

endowed churches for the privilege of having their workmen rung together at stated periods: this is called ringing the *tintamarre.*

"These rural signals serve also for other purposes; sometimes I have seen a hive of bees collected by the sound of the *marre.* In the time of conscription the vignerons had a custom of warning each other from vineyard to vineyard by the same sound of the approach of soldiers, and the reply extended itself rapidly along the line: the moment the troops were seen on the horizon, this warning told all the men to disappear in time. Shepherds also in the woods did the same on the approach of a wolf. This custom of warning by signs was practised in Gaul in the time of Cæsar. It was thus that the massacre of the Romans at Orleans by the Gauls was known in Auvergne between the rising and the setting of the sun."

At Blois, according to old usage, when it was time to leave off work, the cry was raised, "*Dieu pardoint au Comte Thibault,*" and at the same time the *marre* was struck *with a stone.* This was in grateful memory of a certain Count Thibault who introduced the custom in order to prevent the workmen from being forced to labour too long.

About a league from Saumur, at Dampierre, the new road turns off towards Fontevraud, and a varied and beautiful country lies before you through a succession of the most luxuriant vine-yards and woods of light graceful trees, with accidents of growth and ground made for a land-scape painter.

We had, after a time, reason to alter the tone of our commendation of the goodness of the road, which was getting worse and worse at every half league, till when we arrived at the entrance of the village of Fontevraud it appeared to have reached its acme: even after our experience in our abbey-hunting in Normandy we had seldom lighted upon anything so bad; add to which our conductor, as usual, pretending to be in the habit of driving that way every second day of his life, mistook a turn and was carrying us down a ravine filled with water, which was so perilous that we begged he would ascertain the positive position of the abbey before we ventured onwards. He was induced, however unwillingly, to consent to this derogation of his dignity, and we discovered that there was, fortunately, no necessity for our following in the track of an enormous waggon, which had preceded us for some time, but that

we might turn our horse's head in an opposite direction, and ascend a rugged hill before us.

With considerable difficulty, as the road was actually undergoing repair, a great event in these regions, we contrived to reach the rising ground where stands the upper bourg, and found ourselves in a mournful-looking, stony, slovenly square, at one side of which stood the dilapidated walls, rudely repaired, of the ancient church, at another the entrance to a caserne, and in the centre a ruined cross. We were somewhat startled on hearing that it was not customary to permit the remains of the abbey to be shown to strangers, unless they were provided with a special order to that purpose. After some demur, however, and a good many messages taken by lounging soldiers backwards and forwards, we were allowed to traverse several interior courts, and at length our anxiety was relieved by the sight of an orderly, who appeared with an enormous bunch of keys in his hand, each key half a yard long.

It seems the building has long been converted into a prison, and is generally very full, being a central place of detention for the district. Our civil conductor led us through a variety of dark

passages, locking every door carefully after us; and having proceeded some distance we emerged into the faint daylight of the chapel,—the only entire remain of the once enormous and splendid abbey. This part was formerly the choir of the church, and is one of the finest and most remarkable specimens of the period to be met with in any part of France. The immensely high dome is spherical, supported by a range of light and elegantly-formed pillars, with circular arches: the form of the choir is altogether unlike the usual appearance of Gothic architecture, and reminds one rather of the lightness and grace of a Grecian temple; a row of windows behind the pillars of the dome give light to the whole; these have no longer any painted glass. When the coloured rays were thrown down on the tombs and columns and arches in former days, the effect must have been magical.

Service is performed here constantly, and the chapel is in high repair; of course the whitewash materially injures the general character, and the grated seats round for the prisoners have an incongruous effect; but it appears to me idle to vituperate (as is the custom of antiquarian travellers), the powers that be, for turning to the

best advantage for necessary purposes a huge mass of building, like these ancient monasteries, whose ruined walls must either be demolished altogether, which would surely be the greater evil, or employed in such a manner as, while what beauties they have left are preserved, to offer some valuable return for all the expense bestowed on them. I looked on the solid masonry surrounding this beautiful chapel, and effectually guarding it from all further injury of time or weather, with gratitude rather than anger, that the present destination of the abbey was so different from the former: and when another large key was produced which opened a low vaulted chapel in a retired nook, I more than ever rejoiced that every vestige of the royal mausoleum had been collected by the hand of care, if not of taste, and was now placed in security after centuries of desecration. In this low cell, which is lit by one small window filled with remnants of antique stained glass, probably picked up amongst the rubbish of the ruins, lie all that ages have left of the once magnificent tombs of the kings of England of the Angevine race.

Raised about three or four feet from the ground, on wooden blocks, are placed four

statues, three of which are at once recognised as Henry II. of England, and Elionore his wife, and their warrior son, Richard Cœur de Lion; beside the latter reclines a delicate female form, which is either his wife Berengère, or the widow of his brother, John Lackland, antiquaries are divided as to which.

It is impossible that any poet's description could better convey to the mind the impression of the actual appearance of Cœur de Lion in life, than this glorious effigy. As you gaze upon it, an involuntary awe creeps over you, and the frowning brow seems to contract still more, as if reproving the freedom which permits so near an approach to a monarch so powerful and so commanding. His forehead is the grandest I ever beheld—broad, open, and majestic, with straight brows knit firmly together, sternly, and somewhat fiercely; the upper part of the nose is finely formed, but, alas! the rest is defaced, yet, strange to say, the countenance is not disfigured. The eyes are closed, and appear well cut, though not very large; the mouth is firm and handsome, the chin cloven and very finely rounded, the jaw powerful, "the short curled beard, and hair" flowing and thick, and the

moustache fine. The shape of the head good, rather broad in front—the throat remarkably thick and strong, and the breadth of the chest prodigious. One hand remains, which is large and powerful and admirably sculptured, as, indeed, is the whole statue: he wears a robe gathered at the throat, and a belt round the waist, but no appearance of armour; his feet, which are somewhat mutilated, rest on a lion, which is sufficiently apparent. A circlet with jewels surrounds his head, the hair is very dark auburn, and the whole, as is usual in statues of this and of earlier date, has been painted. His heavy mace lies by his side, an evidence of his strength and power. The length of the statue of Richard is upwards of six feet, that of Henry is rather less: there is a striking resemblance between the father and son, but still many distinct traits of individuality. Henry has a less stern and more careful countenance, and his forehead is not so high—his chin is not divided, and his face is somewhat longer. He wears the same fashion of beard and moustaches, but his hair is longer and less curled; on the whole, there is less character of strength in his frame, and a more intellectual expression in his face; his

eyes are finely shaped, and might have been larger than Richard's. He wears a damask robe and a sword-belt; the colouring and gilding are very apparent; his hands are mutilated, but his feet are entire.

The haughty and vindictive heiress of Aquitaine, the cause of so much wretchedness and contention, has a noble head, encircled with a golden coronet, and covered with a veil concealing her hair. Her features, except the nose, which in all is destroyed, are beautiful, but severe, and very stern: her lips compressed, her cheeks rounded and finely-formed; her chest high, and her figure extremely majestic: she is nearly as tall as Henry, and her proportions extremely good. Her robe is in countless folds of drapery, and her feet covered.

The pretty little statue which reclines close to the side of the gigantic Richard, forms a singular contrast with the rest. She is very delicately made; her small hands both repose on her breast, her long waving hair confined by a circlet, and falling on her shoulders: all the features charming; the nose less injured than in the others, the upper part of a fine shape: there is something inexpressibly interesting in

her extreme youth, her helpless delicacy, and her beauty, placed as she is beside the powerful characters before whose presence she seems to shrink and tremble, as doubtless she did in her life time. The artist of each, or all of these effigies, has thrown so much truth into his work that it is impossible not to feel convinced that the likenesses are perfect.

I know not why the statue of the young beauty I have named is called, at Fontevraud, that of Berengère, since Charles Stothard, in 1816, discovered and rescued hers from oblivion, at le Mans, where it had been lying for years in a barn, and was dragged from under a load of wheat. I imagine this to be the effigy of Isabella of Angoulême, whose romantic story suits well with her appearance. She was attached to Hugues de Lusignan, tenth Count de la Marche, to whom she was to have been united, but the tyrant John Lackland, having cast his eyes on her without regard to anything but his own will, made no scruple of appropriating her to himself, and she was forced to become his wife. After his death, however, she was able to repay the constant affection of her first lover, one of the most elegant Troubadour poets of his time, who

addressed several of his lays to her, under the title of *Biaux doux Rubis.* He died too soon for her happiness, and she then entered the royal convent of Fontevraud, where she died, and where also was buried the heart of her son, Henry III, whom she had by John.

The abbey of Fontevraud, or Fontevrault, was the chief of a peculiar order, the only one in which the men were subjected to the women. The abbess was the head of the whole order, and all the monasteries were subject to her command: she was generally a royal personage. The abbey was founded in 1099, by Robert d'Arbrissal, a famous Breton preacher, charged by Pope Urban II, to advocate the cause of the first crusade.

There are several precious morsels of ancient magnificence scattered along the walls, in particular, a circular arched window, of wondrous beauty and size, highly decorated, and exquisitely executed; but it is difficult to examine these remains, in consequence of the whole building, which is very extensive, being occupied by the prison, and visitors being admitted merely as a favour, though with a courtesy on which one is unwilling to presume.

The ancient church of Fontevraud is very cu-

rious; it has little architectural beauty to recommend it, but several of the white marble or fine stone pillars of its high altar, are finely-carved, and of early date; the foliage and vines which surround these twisted columns, are admirable, and there is a good deal of carved wood-work about the altars and *misèreres* very well worth notice.

On one is a large and flourishing rose-tree, which throws its branches in all directions, and whose flowers are beautifully delineated—(could it have any allusion to Henry II.'s fair love, Rosamond,—in the same manner as his namesake of France introduced his Diana and her crescent everywhere?) On another are some "curiously cut," and quaintly *embroidered* waves, which have once been gilt, over which a saint is riding on something which looks strangely like a *broom-stick!* Everywhere, on these antiquely carved blocks of wood, occur *roses*, in groups and singly, as ornaments.

There are pleasant boulevards round the upper part of the bourg of Fontevraud, and the view is rich and varied from the hill on which it stands; but it is, in itself, a wretched, neglected-looking place, with all its glory long departed

from it, and the presence of a huge prison, casting a gloom over it which nothing can dispel.

The bourg of Dampierre, through which we passed on our return, and which is on the high road to Chinon, is celebrated, not only for its fine wine, but for having been the last retreat of the unfortunate Margaret of Anjou, when, driven from all her possessions, deprived of rank, wealth, and having seen the downfall of all that was dear to her, she was received into the house of a private person in this secluded place, and there, after some melancholy years of regret, ended her sad career. The turreted house is still nearly entire, and has considerable beauty and a peculiar interest when her fate is remembered, to whom her own bitter words too well apply:—

"Who sues, who kneels, who says God save the Queen?
Where be the bending peers that flattered thee?
Where be the thronging troops that followed thee?
Decline all this and see what now thou art;
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For queen, a very caitiff,—crown'd with care!"

After leaving Dampierre and its memories of the unfortunate daughter of the troubadour king,

the road to Chinon, which continues to be as beautiful and varied as possible, runs through Montsoreau, a pretty town, nearly at the confluence of the Vienne with the Loire, and celebrated for the remains of its castle of the twelfth century, which is now occupied by artisans and work-people, and divided into a variety of tenements. Seen from a distance, its old walls, towers, and loophole windows have a grand effect, but lose on close inspection. It was the residence of that infamous Count de Montsoreau who directed, in Anjou, the dreadful massacre of the Protestants under Charles IX.

Candes, with its beautiful church, next appears, which once boasted the tomb of St. Martin, who died there about 400. The castle was successively inhabited by Charles le Chauve, Philippe Auguste, Charles VII. and Louis XI. At St. Germain is a fine old church, with a magnificent tower; on the opposite coast may be perceived the turrets of the antique château de Grillemont, where once resided Tristan l'Hermite, the terrible *compère* of Louis XI. Several very interesting châteaux are in this vicinity, those, in fact, which give beauty to the banks of this "famous stream." The fine château

d'Ussé is one of the most remarkable, and not far off is Rochecotte, the charming residence of Madame la Duchesse de Dino, of which, however, I cannot speak, having, unfortunately, missed seeing it.

The drive to Chinon from Saumur, whose delightful towers, and downs, and coteaux we left with infinite regret, is like passing through a succession of shrubberies and parks: there is a good deal of cultivation, and the rich vines give an air of there being still more, but nature has been so lavish of her most refined beauties in this part, that, like superabundant charms in "lovelier things," she scarcely is allowed credit for not asking the aid of art. The fine, high-raised road, which answers to the *levée* on the opposite bank, is in some parts flanked, next the river, by a plantation of sallow willows, and other trees that love moisture, and these are enclosed with a trellis, along which run and climb, in graceful profusion, wild hops and clematis, at this time in full bloom: meadows, like sheets of emerald, succeed; here and there a plantation of gigantic hemp, with its scarlet stems, and every variety of beautiful tree mingled together in groups on the irregular banks, which

seem made for fairy gambols, rise up at each turn of the winding road, now leading through light woods of rare exotic growth, now along a wide, open country, with the glittering and divided streams, studded with islands, shining along the way, forming lakes and creeks, then gliding along in a narrow rivulet, and then lost to sight by the projecting headlands and high vine-covered coteaux, which sometimes sink down, suddenly, flat to the shore, as if in play, while a sister hill throws up her rocky peaks on the opposite side, and seems challenging to sport.

We had plenty of leisure to remark all the beautiful varieties of our way, for the little carriage in which we travelled, occupying the two foremost seats, so as to have an uninterrupted view, was conducted by a boy, whose age could not be more than twelve or thirteen, and who appeared to be in a state of enjoyment perfectly enviable; whether he had but lately arrived at the honours of a *conducteur*, or whether he was influenced by the extreme beauty of the morning, and resolved for once to indulge in uninterrupted happiness, certain it is that he had thrown all care to the winds, and all fear of

overturn or misadventure to the fates, and all responsibility on his horses; as, leaning carelessly back on his box, fastening the reins to a knob on the carriage, he abandoned himself to delicious thought, or rather absence of thought, and applied his ear diligently to catch the foreign sounds which fell from our lips as we conversed in English, or to join in occasionally when his countrymen and ourselves talked of the scene around.

I never saw so perfect a picture of bliss as his gay laughing face exhibited, or such premeditated enjoyment as he seemed to be indulging in; meantime, the horses, who were strong and large, and not by any means loaded, took it as easily as their young master, and sauntered along at a pace more suited to contemplation than diligence. It was not till we had reached a charming turn of the road, which was here bordered with plum-trees, loaded with the delicious white plum of Touraine, and were passing through a village, that the sound of a clock suddenly dispelled in a moment his dream of joy—he started from his recumbent posture, seized his reins and his whip, and, with the startling exclamation of "Bon Dieu!" bestowed

a smart lash on the dormant animals, who were plodding onwards through a beautiful wood in unconscious ease.

Not only was the young charioteer himself aroused, but some sharp voices, which he had not heeded before, now sounded in a higher key from the *interieur*, ordering him to hasten his movements, or we should not arrive at Chinon till night. At this awful surmise, terror seemed to give new energy to the arm of the lately happy idler—he stood up like one contending in a chariot race, and presently his well-directed blows and vociferous exclamations roused equal vigour in his steeds—with manes and tails flying, heads tossed up, heels flung abroad, and harness in disorder, on they rushed, as though some monster of the Loire had suddenly emerged from the waters, and driven them on like the coursers of Hippolytus.

To every one now whom we met, our young *furieux* shrieked out inquiries as to the precise time of day, and by their jeers and laughter we at length discovered the cause of this sudden metamorphosis. If, like the victim of the wood demon, he had not arrived at the inn in the market-place at Chinon at a given hour, he had

a fearful *amende* to pay!—for now the truth was apparent,—we were travelling in *the mail*, and he was the postman!

Tramp, tramp, across the land we went, splash, splash, across the lea—when presently our animated young friend turned round to us with a glance of exultation; and, raising his whip-hand, he pointed to a distant height covered with trees—"Là voila!" said he, "et je me suis bien sauvé!"

He could descry, although we could not, the towers of Chinon, hailing him afar off, and now he knew that his anxiety might be at an end, for he should arrive at the minute. For a time, as the road was level, he relaxed his speed, and we went quietly along, between a long line of poplars, till we reached the bridge, and there the magnificent towers of the gorgeous ruin of Chinon first burst upon our sight. Far up the height, crowning its very pinnacle, rose a pile of antique walls, one over the other, with an enormous donjon frowning over all; the clear, glassy Vienne bathing the foot of the stupendous rock into which the castle is built; fairy islands, covered with willows and poplars, appearing to float along the surface of the lake-

like waters, and high above, hanging from peak to peak, a bridge, which seemed to connect two cliffs, whose steep and rugged sides descended perpendicularly into the river.

Not long, however, could we contemplate this picture, glowing with the bright light of a summer morning's sun; across the old bridge straight went our vehicle, regardless of a whole phalanx of waggons, market-carts, barrows, mules, and panniered donkeys, regardless of the shouts and remonstrances of the passengers, and the threats of opposing drivers: "Place! place!" vociferated our hero of the post, as he drove before him man and beast;—coming violently in contact with a cart laden with stones, as he turned the sharp corner, we thought it was all over with our safety, but the strength of the springs resisted every obstacle, and our foaming steeds, and fiery guide, went thundering into the square; there an extraordinary spectacle awaited us; not an inch of pavement, in a very spacious *place*, surrounded with lofty and well-built houses, but was occupied by market people and their wares: heaps of fruit, flowers, vegetables; droves of pigs, sheep, calves; mounds of meat, cheese, butter, fowls, ducks, geese, men, women, children, and dogs; all

were mingled together so thickly that it seemed impossible to drop a pin between them.

The men, some in large Spanish sombreros, some in ancient French cocked hats; the women in scarlet petticoats and aprons, and snow-white caps of various shapes; a bright blue sky above, a glowing sun over all; such was the market-place of Chinon, with its ruined, slovenly, wooden market-house, affording no retreat to the crowds who flocked round and near it; and through all this compact mass, hallooing, cracking his whip, and calling at the top of his voice "Gare! gare! —place! place!" drove furiously onward our official friend, holding aloft the insignia of his office, the expected letter-bag. At this moment, the deep tone of the church bell of Chinon began to peal, and before the last stroke of eleven had sounded on the ears of the half crushed and trampled, screaming, scolding, expostulating, denizens of the market-place, the "conquering hero" of the royal mail had stopped before the door of the principal hotel, and delivered his credentials to the attendants.

The sudden quiet which ensued in his demeanour, was as irresistibly comic as his former fury; he coolly waved off the vociferous indi-

viduals whom the impetuosity of his wild career had injured, and proceeded to unpack his diligence with an air of great importance, to recommend his passengers to the care of the innkeepers, and to unharness his horses as if he had never in the course of his life been guilty of an hour of idleness. He was pretty well aware that he was on sure ground, and left the exculpation of his violence to his friends of the grande poste, who merely observed, that "*le jeune homme doit faire son devoir, sans ça il serait obligé de payer une amende;*" no more, therefore, was to be said on the subject.

CHAPTER II

CHINON.—The Gardens.— Oubliettes.— Charles VII.—The King's Wife.—Les Caves Peintes.—Adventure of the Caves concluded.—Azay le Rideau.—Les Bannerets.—Cinq Mars. —Letter of Marion de Lorme.

HINON is said to be one of the earliest castles constructed by the Romans in Gaul, but the period of its first foundation is extremely uncertain. In Normandy, and in this part of France, the usual answer to a question of antiquity is, *ça était bâti par les Anglais;* but Chinon goes beyond even that date, which implies all that is old and barbarous in creation. The most ancient part is a huge mass of buildings, extending along from the top of what is called la Rue Jeanne d'Arc, which is but a precipitous way, only fit for goats or mules to

attempt, but which we had ocular demonstration that waggons and teams both ascend and descend, *how* is a "marvel and a secret," without being annihilated themselves, and crushing every one they approach in the narrow, stony, unpaved lane which conducts from the stairs (!) to the first bridge of the castle.

These *stairs*, or, rather, this stony ladder, deserve a word of remark. They connect the lower town with the strange nest of buildings perched on the height, following the walls of the castle, as they serpentine from the river upwards. Enormous walls enclose this way, which was, of course, the only approach in old times, when it was not desirable to render the access to a fortress too easy. They are overgrown with ivy and moss, and the stone steps are so much broken away, besides being very precipitous, that it is a work of time and labour to reach the opening where you are introduced to the grand Rue Jeanne d'Arc, leading to the donjon.

The moment you emerge from this ladder and stand to recover breath, leaning over the parapet at top, you feel that any trouble is overpaid by the beautiful view which bursts upon you: the large, long, scrambling town lies spread out be-

neath, with its high buildings and its spires, the Roman bridge spans the full, clear, broad river, which sparkles along, bathing the opposite meadows and circling round the willowy *aits* which gem its surface, the distant hills of Anjou and Touraine, and a wide extent of country, forests and vineyards, as far as the eye can reach.

It is said to be to the redoubted Thibault le Trichcur, first Count of Touraine, that, in 960, is owing the next division of the ruined walls till you reach the second bridge, where a pile of magnificent ruins extends a considerable way along the walls, in various directions. Henry II. of England, Philip Augustus, and Charles VII. appear to have built the remaining towers, defences, chambers and dungeons. It signifies little when or by whom raised; the whole, "in one tremendous ruin hurl'd," is alike uninhabitable, though the *concierge* and her family contrive to make for themselves a shelter amongst the crumbling galleries of the Tour d'Argenton, somewhat a precarious dwelling, for, notwithstanding the immense strength of the foundation and many of the walls, the ruin is so complete that the winds of winter must have fearful entrance, and the pinnacles of decaying stone look far from secure.

Chinon belongs to Government, and care is now taken to preserve, as much as possible, the venerable remains of this Windsor of the French. The first tower is closed by a strong door of entrance, and visitors are admitted by a porter, who attends to the pretty garden which surrounds the whole of the ruin. Some critics have been very severe on this modern innovation, preferring that the castle should have been left in uninterrupted company with nettles and weeds, but, as I have before had cause to observe, on similar occasions, I cannot agree in thinking that any injury is done to the effect by planting beautiful trees and fragrant flowers, and preventing the growth of noxious weeds, and, perhaps, reptiles, produced from the accumulation of dirt and decayed vegetation. Besides, any approach to cleanliness, in France, must be hailed with welcome, for, whether from love of the picturesque, or from natural slovenliness, not too much of that English commodity is ever to be met with.

To me it appeared infinitely delightful to sit for hours in an expanse of flowers and herbs, lavender, roses, and the wild thyme which the native down produces, and which is allowed to

appear, as well as straggling vine and clustering ivy, every here and there, mixed with more cultivated shrubs and plants:—to sit in such a place, in "a populous solitude of bees and birds," at the foot of a gigantic tower, beside a second, in front of a third, with a range of walls of all heights and dimensions, extending wherever I turned my view, bridges, parapets, turrets, *chimneys*, and all unaccompanied by the dirt and damp and danger which usually attend such sights. Our adventures in Bretagne had a little changed our views of the bliss of exploring ruins left entirely to themselves, and we could find no fault with the pretty walks and glowing gardens of beautiful Chinon.

Chinon was the favourite abode of Henry II. of England, who closed his disturbed life here, broken hearted at the ungrateful conduct of his sons, instigated by their malignant mother. Richard and John both resided here occasionally, and here the former was brought to die; but the most remarkable event which took place within its walls is the presentation of the Maid of Orleans, who should have been rather called of Chinon, to Charles VII.

The tower still exists, and even the chamber,

where that heroic and unfortunate creature recognized the King amidst his knights: there is still a fireplace and part of several windows; immediately leading from it, at that period, of course, concealed by walls twelve feet thick, but now, yawning open through the breaches time has made, is a frightful *oubliette*, which from this, the second stage, descends, dark and hideous, far below the earth to the foundation of the castle. This hopeless dungeon then joined the saloon in which the kings and nobles who kept their court here for ages spent their leisure: they could not, perhaps, be said to hear the groans of the victims thrust down this horrible abyss, because they were too many fathoms below; but the shrieks of famine and despair might occasionally have reached them in the midst of their mirth and revelry; nay, the *gentille* Agnes, when entertaining her royal lover in her tower, might have been sometimes startled with the smothered cry "of hopeless wretches in their agony." In one of these dens languished for years the unfortunate Geoffroi le Barbu.

It is difficult to see the evidences of such barbarity and to believe that anything *gentille* or good could exist in such times! This is not the only dungeon of the kind; we found so many

black gulfs which proclaimed similar destinations that we at length almost feared to enter the extensive ruins lest an unlucky step should render us more intimately acquainted with these "caves of horror;" several, nevertheless, have been filled up, being considered dangerous. There are two deep wells little less so, down one of which a young lady of Chinon fell in 1822, and her corpse was found afterwards on the bank of the river Vienne, just where a canal of communication had been cut. There also existed, formerly, and remains of it are still to be seen, a subterraneous way from the castle under the river, leading to what is still to be traced as a Roman camp, on the hill opposite.

Charles VII. is said to have lived in great luxury at Chinon at the very time when his country was suffering from every hardship that war and desolation could inflict: the note of a receiver of royal revenues in this town, who claimed from the chamber of accounts in Paris *twenty sous* for *new sleeves put to the old pourpoint of Monseigneur Charles Septième,* does not convey any idea of superfluous expense. However, he seems to have had money or credit enough to be able to build a magnificent house adjoining the

royal castle, part of the towers of which still exist, for his beloved Agnes Sorel, who was then a lady of honour to his Queen, and his attachment for whom, afterwards sufficiently public, he seemed to wish to be then concealed from the eyes of the court, as he constructed a subterranean way to her dwelling, by which he was in the habit of secretly visiting her.

This way can yet be seen, but it appears a clumsily managed secret to build a castle close to his own, where his wife resided, to place his mistress in, and then go such a roundabout road to see her, when all the world must have known of the concealed passage. Fair Rosamond's labyrinth was better contrived, though it did not answer so well; but probably poor Mary of Anjou was obliged to appear more blind than Elinore of Aquitaine, who seemed much more mistress of Chinon in her time.

Some historians have cast a doubt on the truth of Agnes' redeeming qualities, her desire to draw her lover from the sloth and supineness in which he indulged while his kingdom was torn to pieces, and her devotion to the cause of France, giving the merit of all these great actions to Queen Mary herself. It is not impossible that the aunt

of Margaret of Anjou might have a great and daring mind, though as she was also the sister of the quiet and contented René of Sicily, it is hard to judge by relationship. If she really were the friend to France, which it has so long been supposed her rival proved herself, she was indeed doubly injured; though conceiving her to have sufficient power over her husband's mind to excite him to noble deeds, how can his fondness for Agnes be reconciled, for whom it is notorious that he built castles and endowed lands? However this may be, after his father's death, Louis XI, whose vices were probably all his own, but who appears to have had some love for his mother, if indeed it was not mere opposition to his father which induced the act, bestowed the castle of Chinon on Mary of Anjou.

It afterwards belonged to Henri de Lorrain, Duc de Guise, and was bought in the end by the Cardinal de Richelieu: it is said that the expense of keeping it from entire decay has for many years prevented any claimant for it, and at present the French government possesses it.

The objects of greatest interest after the castle of Chinon are the *caves*. These are situated beneath the coteau on which the town is built,

and extend for many leagues; indeed, the imagination sets no bounds to their extent. They are immense exhausted quarries, which for twelve centuries have supplied stone for all the required buildings in their vicinity. The castle, bridge, churches, &c. are all built from hence, and the foundations of those tremendous towers are carried down to the lowest depths of these caverns. We traced the cemented stones of the walls of Agnes Sorel's tower amongst the huge masses which lie in picturesque confusion piled into fantastic shapes by the sport of nature. Occasionally basins of clear water are to be met with in these retreats, and some crystallizations are seen clinging to the dripping roofs; but it is rather from their strange forms and enormous and awful extent than from any positive beauty that these painted caverns, as they are called, present a mysterious interest.

Armed with lighted candles, and preceded by a guide bearing a long ladder, we threaded the mazes of numerous paths leading to cathedral-roofed chambers, rugged valleys of rocks, and wild-looking "antres vast," where the flashing lights showed fantastic figures on the walls *painted* by the gliding and dropping water which oozes

through the sandstone. The adventurous may discover, by climbing into narrow apertures, numerous curiously shaped saloons and fine effects of shadow; we were obliged to be content with the most accessible, though we conceived our peril quite approaching near enough to the positive to be sublime.

One large cavern, filled with blocks of stone, particularly struck us; a circular arch, quite perfect, spanned a space which was occupied by a heap of rocks of all dimensions, leaving an opening at the top, which displayed the entire form of the arch, and a range of continued blocks beyond: down the front of this pile, trickled a glittering stream, winding from stone to stone, and forming the only path by which to climb; this stream fell into a little pool below, and then escaped into another arched cavern far lower, which again communicated with another of the same kind.

We were told that an artist, not long since, delighted with the beautiful shape of this curious place, established himself there with painting apparatus, and having placed lights on every projecting ledge, contrived to obtain a splendid illuminated effect, which he conveyed to can-

vass on the spot. The dripping of the roof in some parts makes it difficult to keep lights long enough in one place to gain this object, but it is easy to imagine how grand it must have been, when only our small supply of light threw from glittering peak to peak rays which made the gloomy retreat of hundreds of bats a fairy palace for a moment. We feared every moment that our candles would be put out by these animals, but escaped without such a catastrophe.

Our guide, a young man *en blouse*, and quite *artistement mis*, had been in the *garde royale* of Charles X, and seen some perils during *les Trois Jours:* he told us that not long since, he had conducted a party of ladies through the caves, one of whom he lifted through several difficult passes, and who seemed inclined to dare many more had he not represented the probable danger for a lady. "I recognised the Duchesse de Berry at once," said he, "for I had mounted guard too often at her apartments to be deceived, and her misdirected spirit might have convinced me had it been required."

This man, who is remarkably intelligent and obliging, and with manners beyond his station,

(if, indeed, he was a *private* in the *garde royale,)* seems to obtain his livelihood by exhibiting the caves, and takes as much pleasure in their wonders as the visitors he conducts; his ladder enables him to reach the roof, and procure stalactites for the curious, not without some risk, considering the height and the black gulphs below: no entreaties, however, would repress his adventurous gallantry, and, to our exceeding fear, he insisted on mounting to a vaulted part, where a glittering mass of descending spires invited; having gained the upper rock, he quitted his ladder, and swung himself across the "dark profound" to a somewhat uncomfortable-looking seat opposite amongst a nest of spar. Here he began operating with his fossil-hammer, the clink of which and the echoing sound of the falling fragments as they bounded from peak to peak in their descent, had a strange unearthly sound in the solitude of the wild sombre chambers of this subterranean retreat.

As we stood at different distances below, leaning on projecting pieces of rock, and holding up our torches as high as possible, while he continued his labours by the light which flickered between the transparent drops and branches

of petrifaction, and which he had fixed in a niche, so sculptured by nature as to appear made by the hand of man as a resting-place for some Notre Dame de la Solitude,—many romantic visions flitted before our imaginations of attempted escapes by prisoners from some of the dungeons of the castle in times of old, when every sound of the hammer which might be striking upon a lock or a bar that impeded the progress of the captive, would have carried terror with it.

We thought of the mere possibility of some devoted wretch having discovered a crevice at the bottom of his *oubliette*, through which he had desperately forced his way, and as we had just seen the foundations of the towers in this very place, we figured to ourselves his finding himself in the midst of these fearful caverns, with a feeble lamp his only guide, having wandered from den to den, till by some fortunate turn he might have reached the entrance of the cavern; or, more likely, have strayed about deeper and deeper into darkness till his lamp expired, and his frame exhausted, he sunk down to die.

Several tragical tales are related of children wandering into these caves and returning no more; and one account tells of two boys, who, having wandered about for four days, were discovered, and brought back safe by persons sent in quest of them.

While we remained in a dreamy state of musing, occasionally casting an anxious look at our military conductor still busied in his occupation, a sudden crash above made us start, and in an instant down came a heap of rock and spar, rattling and rumbling along, and with it

the candle which was lighting the work going on overhead. Our first impression was terror, lest the guide should be the next to descend precipitously, and we clamoured for him to leave off, which he now did, and scrambling along in the dark, reached his ladder, and came down the steep side of the cave. He searched carefully for the bits of broken stalactites, and with the characteristic inconsequence of a Frenchman, began to bemoan and express his astonishment at his candle *being broken;* he picked up the bits, and gazed at them with a melancholy expression, forgetting that it would have been more tragical had he been the victim, as we had almost expected at the instant. I asked him if he had a supply of candles; "no," said he, "but I am well provided with light; here is a contrivance which we have in France, *tenez;*" and kneeling down on the slippery ground, he produced a box of lucifer matches, and triumphantly lighted one. "Yes," I exclaimed, "but suppose you had nothing to light with it?" "*C'est vrai,*" said he, quite astonished at the suggestion; such an idea had never occurred to him. He promised in future never to enter the caves without *several* candles, in order to be prepared, in case of an accident like the present.

Meantime, the dripping from the disturbed water became more frequent, and the drops so large, that we thought ourselves scarcely safe, in spite of the ingenious *French contrivance* he was so proud of, and commenced descending to the path which led us back to the mouth of the cavern. By this time, all the surface had become so slippery that our footing was very insecure, and it was not without many falls that we contrived to slide down. I imagined that our route lay clearly before us, in consequence of the apparently recent marks of waggon wheels, but was told that as these were to be seen in all directions throughout the caves, and led to a variety of paths, they would prove but an uncertain guide to any one trusting to them.

More than eighty years had elapsed since any works had gone on here, yet the cart ruts are as fresh as if made yesterday, for they become hardened by the constant dripping upon them till they are like an iron way.

We followed quite a different path on our return, and were introduced to a variety of different caves, in one of which visitors are in the habit of tracing their names in smoke on the flat roof; several English figured amongst them,

of course, but this matter-of-fact proceeding, and the everyday names of *Davies* and *Wylde*, where Cœur de Lion and La Gentille Agnès should be the presiding genii of the place, were like to ruin all our romance, and we hastened on.

The air throughout the caves is perfectly pure, and the lights burnt steadily the whole time; it is also much warmer than usually happens in these subterranean places, but the sudden change from an unnatural atmosphere to open day and a brilliant sun was startling as we approached the mouth of the caverns, where we were restored to their influence.

There is nothing to attract the traveller in the town of Chinon, not a single church of interest, nor a monument worthy of attention, but the walks and rambles round about the castle and its neighbourhood are picturesque and pleasant, and the views of the country through which the bright Vienne pursues its winding way, bearing the tribute of its stream to the sandy Loire, are perfectly delightful. There is an excellent inn at Chinon, which occupies great part of one side of the market square; so good was it, that this circumstance alone seemed to announce that we were not in an insignificant village, but in

a town; a *chef-lieu d'arrondissement.* The people are all civil, obliging, and their charges reasonable.

Our destination was now to the great city so much visited and talked of, and so favoured by our countrymen, that it is looked upon in France as belonging as much to England now as when our English Kings held sway throughout Touraine. Wherever we had been, in all the beautiful country we had travelled, from Caen to Chinon, the praises of delicious, enchanting, lovely Tours, had sounded in our ears, and it was with no little pleasurable expectation that we prepared to set out from our last stage.

The most interesting place between Chinon and Tours, is the little town of Azay le Rideau, five leagues from the latter, situated in an agreeable and picturesque position, and famous for its château, the façade of which is an exquisitely executed morçeau, by the chisel of Jean Goujon. The castle, which replaced one more antique, stands in an island formed by the Indre, and is remarkable from its peculiar architecture, its numerous towers and battlements, and the groups of high ornamented chimneys, which, far off, appear like lances bound together.

The cognisance of Francis I. appears with his mottos everywhere among the friezes and ornaments — his salamander and its surrounding *nutrio et extinguo*, and his other device, more tender still, *un seul desir*, probably understood by some fair favourite of the time, who shared with him the beautiful retreat of Azay le Rideau.

The archives of this manor present a series of names of seigneurs, as far back as the middle of the thirteenth century. From Hugo Ridellus, or Ridelli, Lord of Azay, or de Relay, the little town took its name. This lord was one of those *Chevaliers Bannerets de Touraine*, made by Philip Augustus in 1213, whose title is one of great honour, having been reserved exclusively for the high nobility: an ancient poet has said on this subject,

> Ordre de Banneret est plus que chevalier :
> Comme après chevalier accort suit bachelier ;
> Puis après bachelier, écuyer ; de manière
> Qu'après le duc ou roi est toujours la bannière.

Many Roman remains have been found at Azay le Rideau, in the park and grounds; amongst others, several seal-rings, one of a gladiator, set as a ring; the other, in crystal, a car

drawn by two bulls. These were found in a tomb discovered in the park, at a place called la Rémonière.

The town seems to have been formerly of consequence; it was occupied by the Burgundians, and being reduced by the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VIII, in 1418, this prince, with a barbarity worthy of his father, had most of the inhabitants hung on the roofs of their houses, and the houses afterwards burnt, from whence it was called Azay le Brûlé, which appellation it still retains.

One of the monuments, which is not only the most ornamental, but has occasioned the most speculation of any along the banks of the Loire, is the famous Pile de Saint-Mars, or de Cinq-Mars, about four leagues from Tours. It is a quadrangular pyramid of eighty-six French feet six inches in height, and twelve feet six inches in breadth on each of its faces, at its summit, which is surmounted by five pillars ten feet high, somewhat similar to those on mosques: that in the centre has been destroyed by storm, but those at the four angles remain entire. It is a mass of brick, mortar, and cement, without staircase or opening, and what its destina-

tion could have been will ever be a profound mystery. It is attributed to the Romans, but like the round towers of Ireland, is involved in total darkness as to its origin, and whether the Visigoths or their predecessors built it, it is impossible to decide. Of course it has given rise to endless disputes and conjectures, which will probably continue to the end of time, or as long as this wonderful pile lasts, which there is every reason to suppose will be for ever, to judge by its strength and stability through ages.

The unfortunate favourite of Louis XIII, the Marquis de Cinq-Mars, derived his title from the château near this spot, of which the ruins remain.

At the period, when his fair friend, Marion Delorme, addressed to him the following interesting letter, how little did any of that gay party suppose that steam-boats would ever pass along those shores, and send up their columns of smoke as high as the towers which are now but a heap of ruins: where then resided in gaiety and splendour, he, who doubtless read the lively description of the intriguing Frenchwoman with admiration of her wit alone, and utter contempt for the madman and his admirer.

LETTER OF MARION DELORME TO M. DE CINQ-MARS.

Paris, Feb. 1641.

My dear Effiat, while you are forgetting me at Narbonne and giving yourself up to the pleasures of the court and the delight of thwarting M. le Cardinal de Richelieu, I, according to your express desire, am doing the honours of Paris to your English lord, the Marquis of Worcester, and I carry him about, or, rather, he carries me, from curiosity to curiosity, choosing always the most grave and serious, speaking very

little, listening with extreme attention, and fixing on those whom he interrogates two large blue eyes, which seem to pierce to the very centre of their thoughts. He is remarkable for never being satisfied with any explanations which are given him; and he never sees things in the light in which they are shown him: you may judge of this by a visit we made together to Bicêtre, where he imagined he had discovered a genius in a madman.

If this madman had not been actually raving, I verily believe your marquis would have entreated his liberty, and have carried him off to London, in order to hear his extravagances, from morning till night, at his ease. We were crossing the court of the madhouse, and I, more dead than alive with fright, kept close to my companion's side, when a frightful face appeared behind some immense bars, and a hoarse voice exclaimed, "I am not mad! I am not mad! I have made a discovery which would enrich the country that adopted it." "What has he discovered?" I asked of our guide. "Oh!" he answered, shrugging his shoulders, "something trifling enough; you would never guess it: it is the use of the steam of boiling water." I

began to laugh. "This man," continued the keeper, "is named Salomon de Caus: he came from Normandy, four years ago, to present to the king a statement of the wonderful effects that might be produced from his invention. To listen to him, you would imagine that with steam you could navigate ships, move carriages, in fact, there is no end to the miracles which, he insists upon it, could be performed. The Cardinal sent the madman away without listening to him. Salomon de Caus, far from being discouraged, followed the Cardinal, wherever he went, with the most determined perseverance, who, tired of finding him for ever in his path, and annoyed to death with his folly, ordered him to be shut up in Bicêtre, where he has now been for three years and a half, and where, as you hear, he calls out to every visitor that he is not mad, but that he has made a valuable discovery. He has even written a book on the subject, which I have here.*"

Lord Worcester, who had listened to this account with much interest, after reflecting a time,

* This book is intitled, "Les raisons des Forces mouvantes avec diverses machines tant utiles que puissantes." Pub. 1615, in fol.

asked for the book, of which, after having read several pages, he said, "This man is not mad. In my country, instead of shutting him up, he would have been rewarded. Take me to him, for I should like to ask him some questions."

He was, accordingly conducted to his cell, but after a time, he came back sad and thoughtful. "He is, indeed, mad now," said he; "misfortune and captivity have alienated his reason, but it is you who have to answer for his madness: when you cast him into that cell, you confined the greatest genius of the age." After this we went away, and, since that time, he has done nothing but talk of Salomon de Caus.

Adieu, my dear friend and faithful Henry. Make haste and come back, and pray do not be so happy where you are as not to keep a little love for me.

MARION DELORME.

CHAPTER III.

Tours.—The Bridge.—The River of Sand.—Toute Beauté.—Notre Dame la Riche.—Le Roi Lietin.—Le Chevalier du Renard.—Les Trois Pucelles.—L'Inconnue.—Suspense.—The Dénouement.—House of Tristan l'Hermite.—Torture.—The rival Towns.—Chateauneuf.

Is this the region, this the soil, the clime?—MILTON.

ONG before we arrived at Tours, night had set in, and its beauties were veiled from our eyes: we scarcely regretted this, as we promised ourselves the more delight

in contemplating all its varied charms by the light of day as soon as, recovered from our fatigue, we could set forth on so inviting an excursion. Our inn was so full that we were fain to repose awhile on temporary beds, in a clean bricked salon on the *rez de chaussée*, till room was made for us, by the departure of other travellers. Every attention and civility was heaped upon us, and the whole establishment seemed bent on lavishing all its care on our well-being. Though not one of the best situated hotels in the town, it was certainly one of the most excellent, and perfectly content with our pretty apartments, we arranged to remain there while we stayed at Tours, and next morning sallied forth to the first goal which attracts wanderers, the post-office; after which, we proceeded to the quays, anxious to indulge all our curiosity.

The Rue Royale of Tours extends from the bridge one thousand three hundred and thirty-two feet in length, throughout the whole extent of the town, broad, wide, airy, and paved, and as far as the fact of its being clean and open goes, is worthy of admiration, though, as there are neither arcades nor fine buildings along its extent to break the monotony of its straight line,

an English eye, not unaccustomed to neatness, can find little else to admire, and when a burning sun is striking full upon its long stony extent across the white bridge along the still *straight line* of dusty road on the other side of the river, he almost wishes that the ancient Rue Traversaine had not been sixty years ago replaced by this immense street, which is the boast of Touraine! The shops are in general small and meagre, and the houses without architectural beauty, most of the best being in the older streets; there are some fashionable hotels there, which must be sufficiently noisy, but none are particularly worthy of remark from any splendour of outward appearance.

Somewhat disappointed in this our first venture in Tours, we took our way to the quay: here, with the remembrance of Nantes and all its bustle, its gaiety and its magnificence fresh in our minds, we were wofully struck with the contrast. If beauty consists in vastness, the broad square leading to the bridge has claims to be thought fine: the extreme width of the bridge itself is remarkable, its great length and the number of its arches. As it is looked upon as the finest in France it might be presumptuous

to say that it strikes an unprejudiced or unscientific eye as being singularly *low* for its extraordinary length, but the flatness of its banks here of course prevented its being otherwise. But with so beautiful, so stupendous, so renowned a bridge, where is the river? Where? we asked again, as in amazement we traversed its extent and saw beneath us a sea of sand,—sand as far as the eye could reach,—sand islands and heaps, all sand, deep, undisturbed, dry, and burning in the sun! Mute with surprise we looked round and walked on, when under the centre arch we perceived a thread of crystal flowing brightly onwards, and became aware that we were gazing upon the far-famed waters of the *majestic* Loire.

Exactly in the centre of the stream stood a little boy with naked feet, and trowsers tucked up, fishing! In the deepest part, perched on stepping stones, formed by the débris of the old Roman bridge, were a group of the nymphs of the Loire bathing their garments in the limpid waters, but all beside was a desert of uninterrupted sand! We had been prepared for something distantly approaching to this by the glimpses we had had of the river before, but the Sarthe, the Vienne, the Indre had hitherto come to the

aid of their mistress and concealed her poverty; now she appeared alone and unassisted,—the *bridge* was *all* there, "but the waters were gone!"

We should have been less annoyed at this discovery had we made it anywhere but at Tours—at Tours, which we were told at every step was "toute beauté." We looked round in despair for hills such as those of Saumur, for the vine-covered coteaux, the emerald meadows, the rocky heights, the distant towers, the varied and luxuriant foliage we had seen and left for Tours! We rubbed our eyes, and saw only long formal rows of poplars, or stunted sallows, whose grey leaves added to the glare; a flat shore with scarcely a rise for miles, a long, straggling, ill-built range of houses on one side of the sandy plain, and a slight acclivity on the other, crowned with common-place houses.

Once more we rubbed our eyes, and turned again; there rose the dark sombre mass of the cathedral, smoky and grim; there the one tower of what was once the castle, and there the two mighty piles of St. Martin and Charlemagne; and we resolved to re-enter the town, and make ourselves acquainted with all the wonders it *must* contain, giving up at once, in despair, all hope

of convincing ourselves that Tours was "toute beauté!"

We gave one more glance across the apparently interminable bridge, and saw with pleasure a white, antique-looking tower, rising above the tops of houses, but all interest in it ceased when we were informed that it was a *lime manufactory*, and we turned mournfully from it as we should from Westminster bridge, and

> "the height
> Where patent shot they sell!"

The village of St. Cyr is a sort of cockney faubourg, which has but little to recommend it; *if* there was any water, it might be said to stand well on the banks of *the river*, but, as it is, the dust predominates over the shade which a few meagre poplars throw. Beranger, the poet, lives there occasionally, but even he was away on a tour, so that St. Cyr offered no inducement to wade through oceans of sand and dirt to get at it. A staircase, communicating with the centre of the bridge, conducts to a long walk *in the river*, planted with low shrubs, to the poplar-covered island, where a *café*, celebrated for its *matelottes d'anguilles*, invites the *badauds* of Tours to broil at leisure over

the waste of sand which should be water, and is supposed to roll its streams at the foot of gardens and groves; but, except the eels, it must be all a Bermukide banquet, for all is boast and *promise* there.

The Musée, the Prefecture, and Hôtel de Ville are large buildings, but have a slovenly, neglected look, with discoloured marks on the stone, which has a bad effect, and the unswept pavement round gives an air of desolation quite remarkable; they stand on the square opposite the river and bridge, and look vast and extensive, but have no beauty, antique or modern, to recommend them.

Several rows of small black trees on a raised platform, form a walk, occupying part of the space near the Musée, frequented by children and shabby persons only, and having stone seats much decayed and very dirty, as are the flight of steps leading to it. Some ruined sheds, used when a fair is held here, extend along one side, and a tawdrily painted Chinese *café* appears at the extremity, where, however, nothing is offered to view to tempt the idler.

At what period of the year Tours is to be expected to look gay or clean, I cannot imagine,

as summer, one would naturally conclude, was the time to exhibit fruit, flowers, and out-of-door *agrémens* in the best situations. The river, I am told, is magnificent in winter, but when the foliage, even of the poplars, is gone, and rain and cold succeed the burning sun, *à quoi bon?* We were assured that it was very lively *when the people were there*, and that most of the English were absent from their villas on tours in other parts; but when they come back, what is there to delight them to the degree which has been so often expressed?

The travelling English, or rather the residents in towns, are not often zealous antiquaries, and unless they are so, even the antiquities which may interest some, being difficult to find amongst all the newness which has *improved* the town, what do they discover?—Society. It appears that this magic spell is the charm of Tours to the French, and probably to foreigners also; of course, a mere passer-by knows nothing of that by experience, and should be grateful to learn any sufficient cause which may account for the extraordinary and undeserved vogue of this vexatious place. The drives are far before you reach any spot of interest, and there are *no*

walks: those which are public, are monotonous and tiresome, without view, and ill-kept; and all the gardens being nursery, the odours from them rise as often from cabbage-stalks as from cabbage roses. Still the chief advantage of Tours are the boulevards, which are of great extent; not that they possess any beauty, being mostly low, bordered on one side by rows of houses, and on the other by a high bank, from which a flat of fields, and sometimes nursery-gardens, are seen, but they nearly surround the town, and of course are healthful, and an advantage to the inhabitants. One walk alone has some beauty, being planted with a row of acacias, and running across the most picturesque street in Tours, perhaps, indeed, in Europe. So long and uninterrupted a line of peaked-roofed houses exceeds description! one could scarcely believe it was not exaggerated; but the quartier Notre Dame La Riche has features peculiarly its own, and more singular than in any other town I have ever seen.

The Rue des Acacias divides the long wide street into a faubourg, which extends an immense distance: all the houses, with scarcely an exception, are old, most of them striped

and crossed, many elaborately carved, almost all having projecting fronts; they are of all heights and sizes, among them some which appear to have been magnificent, and the carving of which is delicate and rich; fortunately, the street is extremely broad, so that the extraordinary dirt, and closeness of the houses, is somewhat rectified by the fresh air which can circulate freely. Such black dens as these dwellings are no imagination (at least, no English one,) can picture, with their small heavy windows, and low-arched doors! but over the fronts of nearly every one, trained on trellises, and carefully kept, hung festoons of luxuriant grape-vine, so rich and fine, that they could render any habitation pleasing, however mean; and running, as they do, over these antique buildings, make them actually beautiful, and a perfect treasure to a painter.

I am surprised never to have seen a scene of Prout's taken from some point on the long line of the Quartier La Riche: every step presents new combinations, picturesque and curious in the extreme. Scarcely less than a mile is the walk, from the Champ de Mars, a large, dusty, stony place, bordered with small poplars, to the interior of the town along this antique quartier.

The Duke of Orleans having passed through it not long before, when on his way to Africa, garlands had been hung across the road, from house to house, at intervals; and as, in conformity with the usual carelessness of the French, they had been allowed to remain long after the ceremony of welcome was over, the effect was still more extraordinary: the natural garlands offered by the fine grape-vines, hanging like drapery from every window, would have been infinitely more graceful, if considered sufficient; but eggs, shells, and faded artificial flowers and ribbons, are supposed to show loyalty as much as similar ornaments express devotion when the magnificent pillars of their beautiful churches are deformed by heaps of trumpery, put up to show honour to a saint, as savages cut slits in their flesh to introduce pieces of tin and tinsel!

We were much amused with the names of some of the streets in this neighbourhood, and, indeed, Tours is altogether remarkable for having preserved the old nomenclature of its streets, to many of which curious legends attach. The Rue du Renard owes its etymology to a circumstance belonging to the sad events of which Tours was the theatre at the time when religious animo-

sities ran so fearfully high. In 1562 several officers of the magistracy were suspected of heresy, and on the occasion of a grand procession, thought it advisable to join the ranks in order to appease the popular clamour by their presence. No sooner, however, were they perceived than a general cry was raised, "Au Renard! Au Renard!" and they were pursued with a fury to which they had nearly fallen a prey, as had, on several other occasions, many unfortunate Protestants who were unable to escape the popular animosity. As the cry was first raised in this street, it became attached to it, probably designedly, to keep up the memory of the cause of quarrel.

The Rue Porte Hugon has a still more celebrated reputation, inasmuch as it records the name which served to designate the victims themselves. The Protestants, who were accustomed to meet secretly, and, crossing the ramparts at night, to repair to their place of rendezvous, were occasionally seen by the timid country people, or the superstitious sentinels, who took each dusky and flitting form, as it glided by in the dim light, for the spectre of le Roi Hugon, known, from time immemorial, to haunt the ancient

walls of Tours. From this circumstance the name of Hugonot was bestowed on them; or, as others say, because all sorts of wickedness and evil being attributed to this Roi Lutin, the enemies of the Roman Catholic religion were looked upon as his fitting children, worthy to bear his name.

In the quartier Nôtre Dame la Riche, is a shabby little street, called Rue du petit Gars:* it was so called from the following circumstance, and has not lost its name so long after the event. About 1560, François II, accompanied by the Cardinal de Lorraine, flying from the infection caused by the massacre of Amboise, made a solemn *entrée* into Tours. Every sign of public rejoicing was forbidden; nevertheless, a boy of eight or nine years of age, the son of a rich workman, obtained from his father permission to see the procession, and appeared in a costume somewhat *bizarre*. He had equipped himself as a knight in wooden armour, "silvered o'er," and his casque was surmounted by a bird of a red colour. Two other youths, in grotesque black costumes, led the ass on which the new

* *Gars*, in the idiom of Touraine, is the diminutive of garçon.

knight was mounted; and the party thus adorned, introduced themselves into the midst of the Cardinal's escort, to the infinite amusement of the people. But hilarity, in those days, was not without danger. The *red head* of the bird was thought to convey a double meaning. In the child the King was thought to be typified, and in the bird, who was his head and crown, the Cardinal who directed all his movements. The black attendants seemed intended for some influential members of the church, and the whole farce an insult, for which the town of Tours had to undergo a severe admonition, and great was the terror of the Faubourg la Riche, on whom royal indignation was likely to fall. The record of their fear, and the memory of the event, is kept by the street from whence the young hero issued, being from thence named Rue du Petit Gars.

The origin of the name of the street *des Trois Pucelles* is thus recounted, though it scarcely deserves to be so called, as only *one* lady figures in the history.

In the city of Tours formerly lived a Jew, rich and well-esteemed; he had a very beautiful daughter whose wit equalled her charms,

and when she had grown to woman's estate, her father proposed to unite her to a young man of their tribe, who had no other possession but youth and his love; but these were not sufficient for the fair maid of Israel, who disdained him altogether. Her father remonstrated with her in vain, and represented the worthlessness of all the children of Adam, and the superiority of young Tobias over the great and pompous of the earth. "But if you will not trust my experience, seek, my child," continued the sage Jew, "and judge for yourself. I will guide your researches, and I desire to see before the end of six months, three lovers, a prince, an abbé, and a knight at your feet, and overwhelmed with your contempt."

Nothing could better suit the humour of the young coquette than this proposition, and it required no consideration to accept it at once. Accordingly she collected together a numerous suite of pages and attendants, surrounded herself with ladies, and being provided with rich clothes, gold, and jewels, set out on her expedition, taking the road to Bretagne.

A duke, king, or prince then reigned in Armorica, whose name it is not necessary to men-

tion, suffice it that he was young, rich, handsome, and powerful. The fair Jewess appeared suddenly at his court, where her beauty and magnificence created the greatest possible sensation, but the mystery attached to her added new charms to all: in consequence of being bound by a vow, she was unable to declare her name, and could only be known as "the damsel concealed." The susceptible prince became very soon the slave of her eyes, nor did she appear to receive his professions with coldness, but her delicate reserve required him to defer his pretensions for six months, when the fair incognita appointed him a rendezvous at the town of Tours.

This conquest readily accomplished, she now began to look about for a priest on whom to try the force of her charms, and was not long before she contrived so to fascinate the heart of a young and handsome monk, that, forgetting his vows and all considerations but the hope of obtaining her favour, he listened too readily to her proposal to meet her in six months at Tours to hear his fate decided.

It was not likely that so much genius and beauty should seek in vain for a gallant knight

who would fall before her arts, and the most distinguished paladin of the country was he who accepted her proposal of repairing on Good Friday to Tours at the end of six months, nothing doubting that the hand of his fair enchantress would reward his devotion.

So far all went well, and each adorer was content: the Good Friday, the day appointed for all separately, arrived, and the three lovers repaired to the fair city, full of expectation and impatience. But a difficulty arose, the "Beautiful Concealed" had named no particular place of meeting, and, as her name was unknown, how was she to be found? The prince, the monk, and the knight, were all in an equal state of embarrassment! The prince sent emissaries to every quarter of the city, inquiring news of a young, rich, and fair personage, called The Unknown Damsel, but elicited nothing, and reproached himself too late with his remissness in not having been more particular in his appointment. The monk went begging from door to door in every street, but, as he of course avoided the Jew's quarter, he sped no better in his researches. As for the knight, whose valour surpassed his wit, he resorted to the ex-

pedient of issuing a challenge to all Touraine, proclaiming the transcendence of his unknown mistress, whose claims were not disputed by any appeal.

While they were all in this state of irritated suspense, one morning a billet was delivered to each, appointing them to seek a certain street, and there to inquire from house to house, asking what questions they thought requisite, till they should happily come to one where the answer to their demands would be, "I am yours!" As soon as they got this intimation, each of the swains set out on his voyage of discovery. The Jew, in disguise, failed not to watch their movements, and had no little satisfaction in observing them knock at the different doors one after the other, asking and importuning the inhabitants, who, at each question of a new comer, began to grow more impatient, till, at length the whole neighbourhood was in an uproar, and the "unknown damsel" consigned to perdition by all their gods. The monk, who had had the start of the others, arrived at last at the house where the preconcerted answer invited him in, and with great delight he entered a dark passage, and threaded the mazes of a

gloomy corridor, till he found himself in a large chamber, where, however, no light greeted him. He had not been long there when the prince arrived, and being led into the same room, where he caught, as the door opened, the sight of drapery, he hurried forward, and caught in his arms the form of the astonished monk, who began to roar out lustily, not being certain that the author of ill himself had not embraced him. At the sound of such a voice, and the buffets which ensued, the prince drew back, when a third came to the attack in the shape of the knight, who, finding so different a reception to that he had anticipated, began to lay about him stoutly, and the house soon rang with clamour and the echo of blows given and received.

All night the three unfortunate lovers were confined in this retreat, and when morning dawned, they exhibited such unpleasing marks of their nocturnal contention, that they were glad to observe an outlet, which permitted them to escape into the street, and repair to their several abodes. Breathing vengeance againt the deceitful authoress of their mishaps, they all recommenced their attempts to discover her, but were suddenly

stopped in their career by receiving another billet, (the lady appears to have had much learning for her time,) informing them of the real name and condition of their lady-love, and adding that she was now the wife of Tobias, the young Jew, whom she preferred to them all, with whom she had left Tours, and desired no further communication with either of her adorers, whose Christian virtues she not very tenderly adverted to.

Neither of the gentlemen felt particularly proud of the adventure, and considering it as wise to say no more about it, quietly left Tours, and returned whither their avocations called them: the prince to his kingdom, the monk to his convent, where, as he had supplied himself with charitable contributions, no questions were asked, and the knight probably to make a figure in a Holy War. From this period, the street where the adventure occurred, has been called Des Trois Pucelles; and down this street we went, in order to reach the house whose renown is no less great as having been the residence of no other a person than Tristan l'Hermite.

This house, made by tradition the dwelling of the awful compère of Louis XI. presents a

singular façade. Its roof is pyramidal, going off in steps, like the houses in the low countries; it has two stories, but the upper windows have been changed, and present nothing remarkable to the eye. The door and the two windows, and the ornamental carving round them, are worthy of particular remark and admiration. The entrance door has a circular arch, and is adorned with an ogee canopy, with crockets, having not only foliage, but creeping animals on them; on each side of this is a pinnacle, formed of a twisted pillar, which terminates in a corbel, formed by a very remarkable and hideous group, representing a man writhing in the clutch of a lion. The spandrils have for ornament, a twisted cord, which is repeated beneath the windows in a double line, and has led to the popular conclusion that this was expressly intended to represent Tristan's occupation of hangman, as the hideous figures on the corbels are supposed to present his victims tortured by wild beasts. A fearful interest hangs about this dwelling, and everything in it is looked upon as possessing some hidden meaning. So far is this belief carried, that I heard of a lover of the marvellous being shown the interior of the house

now occupied by a leather-dresser, who expressed a shuddering horror at a variety of large, strong, rusty, *middle-age* looking nails, sticking out from the wall of one of the gloomy chambers—"Ah!" he exclaimed, "on these, no doubt, did that monster, Tristan, hang, impale, and torture the wretched beings who fell under the displeasure of his inhuman master; here—" he would have proceeded, but was stopped suddenly in his eloquent and indignant tirade, by the information that those identical nails had been knocked into the wall by the present proprietor, who was accustomed to stretch his leather upon them. I confess to having had similar misgivings on observing a quantity of "auld warld" looking nails on the outside of the upper story of the house, and as nothing seemed too diabolical to attribute to Tristan l'Hermite, I had not scrupled to indulge in visions of torture, which this story dispelled in time.

While I was making a sketch of the house, a system of persecution was commenced against us by beggars, and curious passers-by, and but for a timely shower of rain, which drove away the herd, and which we welcomed, though we were obliged to brave it, we must have aban-

doned the enterprize, in spite of the civility of Tristan's opposite neighbour, who invited us into his court-yard, and provided us with chairs.

Numerous are the long, narrow, dirty, high, and gloomy streets of Tours! and I believe there were few of them we did not venture to visit, in spite of their uninviting appearance, but as there is literally nothing *without* the walls to attract, and very much within, we resolved not to be easily deterred in our search after old doorways, windows, fountains, and houses, of which there is indeed *foison*. In this respect, Tours is really interesting, though I say nothing of the *beauty* discovered in these rambles, the antiquity and singularity being the recommendations which we sought.

From the Roman walls which formerly surrounded Tours, which the boulevards now replace, to the river, scarcely a street can be passed which has not some remarkable recollection attached to it which fills the mind with pleasure and interest, until having discarded all thought of the disappointment experienced in finding a sandy desert where you looked for an Oasis, you acknowledge this to be a city worthy to attract the traveller who takes delight in the antique,

and is ready to give up his energies in prosecuting discoveries of the olden time through heaps of rubbish, slovenliness, and modern improvement.

In former times, Tours and an adjoining town called Châteauneuf, were two rivals who disputed with each other the palm of celebrity, both for commerce and pilgrimage, and it was long before the present city swallowed up the other and imposed on it her arms and laws. The population of each having caused them to approach closer and closer, a union became the consequence, in spite of the determined hostilities which it took ages to extinguish. Where the Rue Royale now drags its length along, existed in other days gardens and vineyards, which extended between the walls and towers that divided the two towns and formed a neutral ground.

The fine towers of St. Martin and of Charlemagne, beacons which are seen for leagues overtopping all the other buildings, stood in Châteauneuf, while those of St. Gatien were, as they may still be considered, the pride of her twin sister. The Quartier de la Poissonnerie formed a third and distinct portion, and, as its name imports, was dedicated to the fishers of the Loire, and to

mercantile persons; and this part was separated from others by vineyards and gardens. The names of the old ugly streets in these neighbourhoods tell their own story, as those de la Lamproie, de l'Egout des Tanneurs, du Commerce, Nourricière, Cerisier, des Haies, &c.; and the Trou des Maures speaks of Charles Martel and his victories over the "Heathen hounds" who dared to seek him so far in the interior of his kingdom.

It is probable that all the trade was carried on in this third part, which had the advantage of being on the river, and that the other two were rather distinguished for their churches, their castle, and their strength.

A monk of Marmoutiers of the twelfth century has thus described the inhabitants of Châteauneuf:—"They are rich, dressing in robes of purple, lined with furs of *vair* and *petit-gris:* their furniture is enriched with gold and silver; their houses are surmounted by high towers; their tables are covered with the greatest delicacies. They pass their time in playing at dice and cards. They are affable to strangers, benevolent and generous to the Church, charitable to the poor, firm in their resolutions, and faithful to their promises."

This is a picture which gives a rather exalted idea of the refinement of Châteauneuf in those days, and would make it seem the Faubourg St. Germain of the period. When we are informed that Tours could boast of no less than nine convents of men and eight of women, besides hospitals and other monastic establishments, the number of ancient doorways, windows, and remnants of walls, need not excite surprise.

CHAPTER IV.

The Cathedral.—The Mother.—The Tomb.—St. Julian.—Dearth of Churches.—Streets.—The Trellis.—The Towers.—The Musée.—A morning with the Old Bridge.—Charles de Lorraine.—Heurte Loup.—View-hunting.

T. GATIEN, now the cathedral of Tours, is extremely beautiful. Its first constructions actually remaining may be dated from 1170. About a century later, under St. Louis, the choir was terminated, and from period to period additions and restorations have made it what it is, one of the lightest, finest, and most pleasing in France. Its painted windows, which are entire, are exquisite, and in great profusion: those which surround the choir have a very fine effect, besides its being unusual to see them so placed. The rose windows are very

brilliant, partly restored, but very well done, and the whole is gorgeous and beautiful; the colours would seem almost too brilliant were they not shaded by the exquisite stone-work which covers them as with a veil of point lace, and subdues the richness of their hues.

As the greatest neatness and cleanliness prevail, and the whole is maintained with extreme care, it is impossible to find a more delightful retreat on a burning hot day, such as we sought shelter from, than this inviting church, where we afterwards spent hours every day tracing the arms of Blanche of Castille, and her sainted son, on the windows, copying the intricate patterns which run in mazy lines over the delicately-coloured panes, and making out the crimson, blue, and green draperies of the saints who figure among the canopies and towers which hem them in on every side. The diversity of the stone-work is very great, forming every variety of flower and leaf-like shape over the glass, filled as with rubies and emeralds, and no repetition is to be discovered.*

* Much of the original magnificent glass painted by Sarrasin, a celebrated artist in this style, born at Tours about the end of the fourteenth century, was destroyed by a tremendous hail-storm about 1667.

There is but one tomb, but that is very interesting, and was well restored in 1815. It is the work of the brothers Juste, who were natives of Tours, and is executed in the best style of the *Renaissance.* This monument was erected for the two infant sons of Charles VIII. and Anne of Bretagne, whose effigies repose on the marble sarcophagus, and their pretty innocent faces are well delineated. The ornaments and allegorical figures are well designed and executed; and placed in a chapel partly in shadow, with gleams from the richly-coloured windows just touching its pure marble garlands, the whole presents an image of innocence and peace soothing and agreeable.

The illustrious heiress, who, by the loss of these children, became twice Queen of France through her marriage with the successor of her first husband, must have felt a pang as she consigned these sweet little creatures to the grave, and wept over the loss of her name of mother, destined not to be renewed: perhaps her after glory, and her happiness with the father of his people and the husband of her choice, could scarcely compensate for the grief of heart with which she knelt weeping on the steps of this tomb as she gazed on

the counterfeit presentment of those two brothers.

" Pauvre mère, ton fils est mort !"

The epitaphs are as follows :—

Charles huitième Roi preux et excellent
Eut d'Anne Royne et Duchesse de Bretagne,
Son premier fils nommé Charles Orlant,
Lequel régna sans mort qui rien n'épargne,
Trois ans, trois mois Dauphin du Viennois,
Comte Dijois et de Valentinois.
Mais l'an cinq cent moins cinq* il rendit l'âme
A Amboise le seizième du mois
De Decembre, puis fut mis soubs la lame.

Par Atropos qui les cœurs humains fend
D'un dard mortel de cruelle souffrance,
Cy-dessoubs gist Charles, second enfant
Du Roi Charles et d'Anne Royne de France,
Lequel vesquit Dauphin du Viennois,
Comte Dijois et de Valentinois,
Vingt-cinq jours, puis les tours au Plessis,
En Octobre mourut au deux du mois
Mil quatre cent avec nonante et six.†

The two towers of the cathedral are each two hundred and five feet in height, and the portals are rich and fine; there is a handsome

* 1495. † 1496.

flight of steps leading to it, and the square in which it stands is spacious and clean, though without anything besides to render it remarkable.

The next church in importance to St. Gatien was, in early times, that of St. Julien, now forming part of the Hôtel St. Julien, and its fine choir used as a coach-house and stable!—curiously enough, for St. Julien is the patron of travellers. As it offers great accommodation for this purpose, it is to be hoped that the venerable and interesting building will not be destroyed; and as it is kept extremely clean, and far neater than is usual in France, one feels scarcely inclined to mourn over its present state, as it is only by contributing to "general utility" its existence has been preserved at all. It is singular enough on going to see about the preparations for a journey to find yourself in a magnificent vaulted cathedral, lofty arches and slender shafts, carved pillars and ornamented windows, strangely mingling with loads of hay and straw, and carriages of all descriptions, while neighing steeds and clamorous *conducteurs* make that roof re-echo which once rung only to choral strains and hymns of praise!

The magnificent abbey, of which this is all that time's mutability has left, was founded by Clovis, in 508, at the period when he came to Tours in pomp and triumph after his victory over Alaric, and in the church of St. Martin solemnly arrayed himself in the imperial robes sent him by Anastatius the Emperor!

Here were placed with honour and all reverence, the holy relics of St. Julien, for relics were always opportunely discovered in those days immediately that a great prince had endowed a place to receive them; here were miracles performed, as wonderful as any vouchsafed by St. Martin or St. Gatien, its rivals; here resided, in all the state befiting the church's dignity, its distinguished abbots, all of high birth and renown; here, in the grand hall of the abbey, was celebrated, in 1459, the marriage of a daughter of France, Magdeleine, to the gallant Gaston de Foix, Prince de Viane; here that *pious* monarch, Henri III, in 1589, opened the parliament which he had transferred to Tours; and here the traveller takes his place and sees his baggage packed for every town on the Loire, and hears only conversation fitting such subjects; all the princes, cardinals, abbots, and monks of

bygone days as thoroughly unknown to the present generation, as the fate of their splendid abbey was to those great men who deemed their dignity eternal!

It struck us that churches did not by any means abound in Tours, for every second apparition of a church which we saw turned out to be used for some commercial purpose; and the remark we made *everywhere* we travelled applied peculiarly to Tours,—that the congregation in all the churches was singularly thin, even on fête days; rarely are men to be seen at all, and of the few women the greater part are aged and infirm, and of the lowest order.

The church of St. Saturnin is one of the oldest in the town, and possesses a good deal of interest, but is sadly neglected. St. Pierre des Corps was named from the fact of the Normans being defeated in 838 under the walls of Tours, when the heaps of dead bodies of the vanquished were piled up beneath the walls of this church; a street near is still called St. Jean des Coups. Another church, now desecrated, called La Bazoche, was founded on the site of a Roman tower, commonly called the tower of Cupid; oddly enough the street called du Petit Cupidon

led into that in which was situated the convent of the Ursulines. But there is no end to the comic associations attached to the streets at Tours, and the speculations which their names give rise to: among others are, Rue de la Ville Perdue, Rue des Anges, Rue des Huit piès, Rue du Serpent Volant, des Belles Filles, dè Jerusalem, de St. Julien le Roi, de Boucicault. Some of the names over the shops are sufficiently comic, as, for instance, *Roméo, coiffeur et parfumeur; Homo, tailleur.*

We had heard much of the fountains of Tours, and sought with great care for them, but though they doubtless are a great accommodation to the inhabitants, they serve little to beautify the town. There are six public fountains, a circumstance greatly to be rejoiced at in a French town: one, at the *caserne d'Infanterie*, is a handsome modern structure; but the most interesting one, which, though it no longer stands in its original place, is to be found in the Place du Marché, is very beautiful. The marble of which it is formed is of Genoa, of great beauty, and its execution is the work of the celebrated brothers, Juste. It bears the name of La Fontaine de Beaune, from Jacques

de Beaune,* Seigneur de Semblançay, governor of Touraine, at whose expense it was erected, and who suffered under a false charge in 1527.

* The ancient château de Semblançay, the ruins of which are still seen, was built in 993, by Foulques Nerra, in order to serve with other neighbouring fortresses as a blockade to the town of Tours. A modern castle was constructed by Jacques Fournier de Beaune, governor of Tours and intendant of finances, whose fate was so tragical. Of him, Marot speaks in one of his elegies, remarking on his *fortune*,

Mais cependant sa main gauche très orde,
Secrêtement me filoit une corde ;
Qu'un de mes serfs, pour sauver sa jeunesse
A mis au col de ma blanche vieillesse.

The arms of Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany are to be distinguished; the escutcheon of Louis, the porcupine, and the motto, *cominùs et eminùs;* and that of Anne, an ermine with the words, *potius mori quàm fœdari.* This beautiful fountain is of an elegant shape, and elaborately ornamented with arabesques and various sculptures.

In the neighbourhood of this market-place, which is spacious and good, are several curious antique houses.

Perhaps the most curious, as they are the most stupendous monuments in Tours, are the two Towers of St. Martin, all that

"The Goth, the *Norman,* time, war, flood, and fire"

have left of the magnificent church once of such renown, where the bones of the saint were found in a tomb, which the *piety* of the arch-hypocrite, Louis XI, surrounded with a trellis* of silver, weighing six thousand seven hundred and seventy-six marcs,—a costly ornament which the warrior king, François I, destroyed, and had melted down into coin, called *testons au gros bonnet.*

* According to the chronicle of Jean de Troyes, "il fit la grille de St. Martin de Tours, avec les aiguières et les gobelets d'argent dont les gens glorieux couvraient leur tables." The subtle tyrant contrived to provide for his pious gifts *à très peu de frais* by this expedient.

Jacques de Beaune, the governor, on issuing orders that the king's will should be accomplished, found that no workman in Tours was to be met with who dared execute so profane an order, and he was obliged to arm himself with a hammer and set the example. Probably his after fate was considered, by the devout, as a punishment for the insult he had offered to the saint. To destroy so fine a work of art, as it is reported to have been, must have given a pang to the Roi Chevalier as well as his loving subjects, who looked upon this trellis as an object of pride and veneration: but necessity urged, and doubtless the money into which it was converted, greatly comforted the mind of the sovereign at least, though the regrets of the people of course remained in full force. The great revolution swept away all the rest of the church but these two towers: one, that of the portal, was saved, as it holds the town clock. The other, whose height is immense, is called La Tour de Charlemagne, and is the crowning wonder of Tours. It is related that the great Emperor's wife, Luitgarde, dying at Tours, he erected this monument over the tomb of a being tenderly loved by him. It was on the occasion

of his journey to Rome to receive the crown of the East, that this misfortune overtook him, and he found himself monarch of the world with a bereaved heart, in which glory was effaced by grief! He is said to have attended on the fair object of his affection with the greatest tenderness during her illness, and having a peculiar devotion to St. Martin, he had her buried with great pomp in the church dedicated to that Saint.

The wonderful solidity of this gigantic tower, may account for its escaping the sieges and fires which St. Martin had to undergo through several ages, since the first construction of the church. It supports the fine bell, called by the saint's name, which was founded in the reign of Charles VII, who contributed five hundred *livres tournois* to its expense.

From every point, at every distance, the glorious Tour de Charlemagne looks out from its nest of buildings, making all appear like pigmies near it, and adorning the scene, in all directions, with its gigantic proportions. The Tour St. Martin would astonish by its size, but for its dominating neighbour, before which every building sinks into insignificance. It is much

to be regretted that both stand in so bad a situation, surrounded by a mass of crowded, filthy houses, as closely packed as possible, huddled at their feet, as if seeking the protection which they have too long found: if cleared away, and the towers left free, a great object would be attained, and these fine monuments appear in all their grandeur,—a "consummation devoutly to be wished!"

The Musée, it must be confessed, is *very bad.* I never remember to have seen so many execrable copies collected together; it appeared to me the very triumph of bad taste, and I could scarcely credit the evidence of my eyes, as I looked from historical portrait to portrait, worthy only of a sign-post, and remembered that I was in the *Musée du Departement d'Indre et Loire!*

Two enormous pictures, by M. le Comte de Forbin, are, however, worthy of attention, not only from the magnificence of their subjects, but the breadth and boldness of their execution. One represents ruins in Upper Egypt during the inundation of the Nile, the waters and mysterious buildings illumined by the rising sun: the colouring, design, and conception, are very fine and imposing. And the same feeling per-

vades its gigantic companion, the ruin of Palmyra,—Tadmor in the Desert,—by sunset, with Arabs attacking a caravan from Mecca. If these two pictures were alone in the large, glaring, ugly, ill-constructed, whitewashed room, which serves as a gallery, they would redeem the disgrace, in some measure, of having such a room at all; but as it is filled with numbers of dreadful daubs, called, profanely, the works of all the great masters of the arts, there is nothing to plead the excuse of the authorities for expecting any pictures to exist a month exposed to a burning sun, reflected from the broad expanse of sand immediately opposite the unshaded windows, which look into a large square, all white stone, throwing up a glare of light enough to fade the vitraux of St. Gatien.

The first time we visited this *singular* Musée, it was crowded with all the blouses, and sabots, and frocs, of the peasantry and military of the place, who, though requested by the book of the catalogue to present themselves *d'une manière décente*, did not appear to have paid much attention to the hint. On our next visit we were solitary in our observations, not an inhabitant or visitor in Tours having thought it worth

while to mount the dusty staircase, and indulge in the exhibition of geological treasures which occupy an upper story, or gaze on the wonders of art which the department has collected into its bosom. One picture, said to be by Fréminet, a copy from Michael Angelo, though it possesses not much interest as a painting, is curious from having formerly belonged to Plessis les Tours, where it fitted into a certain recess, to effect which it had been cut on each of its four sides. It would appear that respect and devotion to the arts is not the foible of the dwellers on the banks of the Loire in Touraine.

The sun was shining with intense lustre, but there was a fresh breeze; we had had several days' violent rain, which, together with the "mute arbitress of tides," had combined to increase the waters of the Loire, and give it some appearance of a river. It ran sparkling along as if its sands were of gold, and the waves liquid diamonds, for nothing can equal their extreme purity, the absence of mud preventing any turbid appearance: it flows like Al Cawthar, whose bed is strewn with jewels, but it cannot boast of the trees on its banks!—however, such as they were, we resolved to seek what shade they might

bestow, and we accordingly plunged into the sands on the side of St. Symphorien, and waded along till we reached the picturesque ruins of the old bridge, and the sandy and sallowy Isle du Vieux Pont.

Half buried in the accumulated sands, stand several decayed arches of this picturesque ruin, through which the distant buildings peep, like pictures in perspective, and whose accidents of foliage and weeds render it quite an artist's study.

It owed its erection to Eudes II, fourteenth hereditary Count of Touraine, in 1022, who, contrary to usual custom, allowed all passengers to pass free of toll, taking all expense on himself, as his sole motive in building it was the prevention of the numerous accidents which were constantly occurring in the passage of the Loire, during the overflowings of the river. It existed till 1780, when the new bridge was thrown open to the public. It is to be greatly regretted that the latter is in a state which threatens some misfortune, as, for many years, more than one of its pillars have been found to have sunk considerably, a source existing beneath which was not suspected at the time the bridge was built. It

would be mortifying enough for modern science if this boasted work of art should be rendered unserviceable in so short a time, when the other, constructed in a barbarous period, lasted upwards of seven centuries!

After loitering about, making sketches of its picturesque forms, for some time, we sauntered along the island, anciently dedicated to St. Jacques, and for several hours enjoyed the cool freshness of the waters glittering close to our feet, as we sat under the small stunted willows and poplars by its brink. Nothing could be more agreeable, and if the opposite banks had presented a better aspect, — if the trees which shaded us had been other than they were, and the grass been less coarse and rough,—if, in fact, we had been sitting on a willowy ait, such as our own beautiful Thames presents, the scene would have been quite perfect. Could we have been transported on such an island, to the coast opposite lovely Saumur, and have looked on the vine-covered coteaux, and romantic rocks which beautify its borders, we should have had nothing to desire. We sat and amused our fancies with these wishes, and in the mean time gazed before us on the dark mass of the ca-

thedral, rising from the town it seems to protect, the roofs of St. Julien, gloomy and defaced, the long formal row of poplars by the side of the quay, and the remnants of the antique château, now forming part of a plain, uninteresting building, used as barracks.

All that exists of this once strong castle, are two towers, one of which makes a good object in this view; it is called La Tour de Guise, and is more modern than the rest of the château. It derived its name from the circumstance of Henri III. having, in 1588, confined in it Prince Charles de Lorraine, eldest son of the Duke de Guise (le Balafré), whom he had just caused to be assassinated at Blois, with the Cardinal, his brother. It would appear that, however guarded by nature and art a prison may be, there is a possibility of escaping from it; for in somewhat a similar manner as the Cardinal de Retz managed to delude his gaolers at Nantes, the prince, after being detained for two years, got away by means of a rope which had been conveyed to him, and which he fastened to the battlements, and slid down by it from the top to the bottom. In spite of the broad fossés which then existed, and of course, numerous other ob-

stacles, he reached St. Avertin before his escape was discovered, and from thence fled into Berry, where he was able to join his partisans.

When we had enjoyed this cool retreat sufficiently, and threaded all the windings of the little sandy paths along the island, discovering the haunts, not of naiads, but nymphs engaged in such occupations as the royal maids of Homer might beseem, namely, laving their garments in the gushing stream, which went foaming and sparkling over the stones and pebbles that impeded its way, we turned our steps to the opposite bank and explored the faubourg of St. Symphorien, which has an air of great antiquity, though no beauty or picturesque effect to recommend it. Its ruinous old church is, however, very curious. The portal is elaborately carved with the rudest and most grotesque figures, amongst foliage and flowers, well expressed: one favourite group amused us extremely, and appeared unique—an angel's head, with an open mouth, from which issued a stream received into a very commonplace-shaped jug or pot, after trickling over what seemed a book or an ornamented box; in this pot were two spoons: the whole composition is far more sin-

gular than elegant, but is frequently repeated round the arches. It is remarkable, considering how much defaced great part of the façade of this church is, that three saints, almost unharmed, have kept their places under their canopies, and are yet within reach of any destroyer.

We crossed a dingy black-looking street, with its ominous name of *Heurte Loup*, and mounted the *côte* between long walls which enclose gardens, and probably some good houses, but as they were not visible, we could only conjecture so. We toiled along with great perseverance, being now convinced, that on reaching the summit of this stony rugged road, we should behold a view which would repay us for our trouble and redeem the character of the country; but we found everywhere nothing but brick walls hemming us in, or deep roads shut in by high banks: occasionally a peep could be obtained of the towers of the cathedral opposite, but in an instant another high brick wall snatched it away. Thus we went on, still hoping and expecting, and still disappointed! There are, it must be confessed, no walks in or about Tours!

We had before tried the experiment of the

Tranchée, the broad road which is a continuation of the bridge, and seems, seen from the Rue Royale, to promise a view: we were told that the buildings there were fine, and as, at a distance, they appeared so, we took it for granted, and were not a little surprised to find a large octagonal space surrounded with uninhabited houses, half built and left to neglect, though originally intended to have been handsome; dirty butchers' shops, such only as France can exhibit! and every description of slovenliness that could annoy and disgust.

From this renowned Tranchée several roads branch off in a star, and if it were really properly arranged, the whole place might be handsome, for the position is good, being the most elevated near Tours, and terminating a long broad road, which *might be* cut into terraces and made very agreeable; but if such was ever the intention it was abandoned, and woe to the inexperienced who, like us, embark in an attempt to walk beneath the trees, *not* poplars, on what we thought was a pretty path, where, being once arrived, we were compelled to remain, as the bank was too steep to permit of our descending to the preferable dusty road below. At distances, with-

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in high walls which shut out all but the roofs, on the top of these banks are country-houses, which must have good gardens, and, *if* there is any view of the town, it may be there obtained.

After a most uninteresting half league of dirt and dust, we rejoiced to find ourselves again on the bridge, where the scorching sun was glowing in full strength across the sandy waste below, and the stony pile above. Oh! this fatal and finest of bridges! whether the unwary traveller is caught in rain, wind, or sun — and we experienced the delights of all — the arrival on the *wrong* side of it from his hotel is to be deplored, for it seems interminable, and instead of your complaints exciting pity in the hearers of your misadventures, you are doomed to listen to its praises, and find you have only administered to the pride of the *Department* in lamenting its amazing expanse. When the Loire is in all its glory, namely, in the winter, and a sharp wind is blowing from the unsheltered shores, the delights of crossing must be still more striking, though we found it sufficiently so, with a brisk wind driving columns of sand into our faces from the exhaustless store below.

CHAPTER V.

Plessis les Tours. — The old Husband. — The Towers. — Louis XI.—Balue.—Olivier le Dain.—Seven Sleepers.—Holy Balm.

HERE were several days of oriental heat while we remained at Tours; indeed, although we had heard the climate much praised, all we experienced of it was an extraordinary and sudden transition from extreme heat to intense cold and wet. One evening, unrivalled in any West India island for closeness, we sought the Boulevards, where we were told *all Tours* resorted to enjoy the cool air from the gardens, and there, amongst loitering groups of soldiers and labouring people, their day's task finished, who represented the society of the town, as in most other French cities, we learned how much

more intense the heat might be on a terrace which had all day been exposed to the sun's rays, shut in as it is by houses and high banks, even than in the streets, where the broad black gutters threw up their steams, and announced an approaching thunder storm, which was not long in arriving.

There was one spot which we were very anxious to visit, and finding that it was within a short walk, we set out to indulge our wish by paying our devoirs to Plessis les Tours. Crossing the stony desert of the Champ de Mars, newly planted with infant *poplars*, where no shade is to be procured by any possible deviation from the beloved straight lines, we entered upon the dusty road which conducts to the famous château of Louis XI. Of course we had not been a day in Tours before we had procured Quentin Durward, a work which is looked upon as belonging exclusively to this town, and which is produced by every bookseller the instant a stranger of any nation sets his foot in his shop. Full of recollections of the Scotch hero's adventures, we formed all kinds of images of the mysterious abode, which we were aware is now converted

into a boarding house, and has been almost entirely rebuilt.

Not far from the barrier is the village of Plessis, whose vine-covered cottages make it altogether rather pretty, as it is less slovenly than usual in French villages; but as there are no trees in any direction save stunted elms, which can afford but little shelter from the sun, we began to find our walk anything but agreeable, and paused by the side of a garden gate to recover our strength. The cottage, garden, porch and well before us immediately engaged our attention. "This, then," we said, "shows the effect of prejudice; we should have denied the possibility of so much neatness and order being met with in this *laissez-aller* region, if we had not stumbled upon this charming little rural retreat; but where in Kent or Surrey could be found anything better arranged? The neatly-clipped hedge, the clean steps, the well-trained vine over the well-painted trellis, the beds of highly-cultivated picotees, the roses, dahlias, and a world of flowers without the semblance of a weed, all, in fact, that should make a fitting abode for 'young Love,' or where a poet might profess his wish 'blest to live and calm to die.'"

We had time to make these sentimental observations while unobserved by the mistress of the house, but as soon as she perceived us, she came forward with native politeness and in an accent which was not altogether what we had been accustomed to hear, invited us to walk in and repose in a pretty arbour, which she pointed out. We accepted her obliging offer, and began instantly admiring her dwelling, when we discovered that we were talking to almost a countrywoman, and all the mystery was at an end.

She had lived the greatest part of her life in England, having married a Mr. *O'Brien*, who she told us she *believed* was an *Englishman*, when very young, which might well be, for this husband was fifty years older than herself. She spoke of him with such deep affection, and of England, that we were quite moved, and as we seated ourselves in her beautiful little parlour, and looked round on her handsome French furniture, arranged with English neatness, we thought the combination charming; and as she busied herself with the "house affairs," we speculated on the probable income which supported this pretty establishment in a cheap country.

After a time the widow returned to us and

renewed her commendations of her departed husband. "Ah!" said she, "he was both a learned and a good man, and I had a great loss in losing him; however," she added, "my present husband, *who is reposing there*," pointing to the next room, "is equally good and kind, *though* he is a Frenchman, and *only* thirty years older than myself."

We could not avoid laughing at this very *bizarre* taste on her part, and hoped her present lord was not ill. "Oh no," she answered, "but the weather is hot, and as he is advanced in years, I make him lie down a little before dinner."

As we found their dinner was nearly ready, and probably she delayed calling her antique partner till we took our leave, we prepared to continue our walk, having obtained from her ready courtesy all the information necessary respecting the locality; and with a bouquet of the richest and most beautifully tinted picotees, presented by our hostess with all the grace of a Frenchwoman and the cordiality of England, we bade her good morning, charmed with the specimen she had given us of what a good example can effect; for evidently she was the cause

of the superior neatness we had observed in passing through Plessis.

There are several antique *striped* houses of very early construction near the entrance to the château, where now no pitfalls nor other concealed dangers lurk to entrap the unwary wanderer, as in the days of its gloomy master, who must have chosen this site for his favourite abode because of the advantages it offers for observing an enemy a long way off, while it is itself concealed by the flatness of its position; of the *three* moats, and the countless defences which protected it in his time, not a vestige remains; indeed, except one tower with its little *donjon tourelle* attached, there is nothing exteriorly which indicates anything but a mere modern residence. In the interior, with the exception of the staircase of the tower, a few passages, and one or two chambers, all the immense and fearful building has been swept away. This staircase is, however, beautifully constructed, the steps connecting themselves with the spindle, which they ornament, with delicate ridges; at the landing-places, the roof is finely carved with foliage, and the staircase terminates in a beautiful umbrella-shaped roof, from which hangs a richly-

ornamented pendant. Attached to this tower is a smaller one, whose narrow stair leads to an apartment perched at the highest extremity of the castle, and having little windows from which a very extensive view of the level country for leagues is obtained. In this tower, Charles VIII, when Dauphin, was made to reside, kept little better than a prisoner by his jealous father. It is now the study of the master of the mansion, a literary man, who is preparing a history of Louis XI. We were amused to observe on his table a French illustrated copy of Quentin Durward beside a Sismondi and a modern and ancient copy of the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles.

This is certainly a delightful retreat for a scholar, for, as there was no escape for the poor prince, so is there difficult access to intruders, and the author may feel himself quite safe in his *tourelle*—provided, always, he is not obliged to rouse himself to do the honours to some "curious traveller." We had, however, no remorse, as M. Louyette was otherwise occupied, and had delegated an English gentleman to explain all the wonders of his castle to us.

To build this royal château, Louis XI. purchased, in 1463, of Hardouin de Maillé, the

lordship of Montils for the sum of one thousand five hundred gold crowns, and constructed it almost entirely of bricks in the midst of a park, whose principal attraction was its vicinity to the Cher. Water brought at great expense from a spring on an opposite hill, and conducted *beneath* the river, supplied the fountains of the castle courts. The chapel was fine, but exists no longer. Here then lived, for some time, surrounded with guards and defences, the morose tyrant, who made every one tremble who approached him, whose cruelty knew no bounds, whose duplicity was equalled only by his sagacity, whose character the historian has justly described as

> Mauvais fils, mauvais père, infidèle nourri,
> Frère unjuste, ingrat maistre, et dangereux ami.

Here he dwelt in constant terror of death, listening to the ignorant or designing prognostics of his physician, Jacques Cottier, who could make the tyrant shiver with fear at his will;* and here

* Comines relates, that so great was his confidence in this man, that he gave him " en cinq mois cinquante quatre mille écus *contans* et l'Evesché d'Amiens pour son neveu et autres offices et terres pour lui et ses amis:" he adds that " il lui

he directed that his tomb should be prepared, giving, in spite of his parsimony, a thousand crowns of gold, that due magnificence might be exhibited in its decoration; and here he closed a life, useful to his country though odious to the world, on the 30th of August 1483. His body was solemnly deposited in the church of St. Martin, and afterwards transferred, as he had desired, to Notre Dame de Clery, where a statue was erected to his memory.

It was in 1469 that the Cardinal Balue, convicted of having betrayed secrets of state to the Duke of Burgundy, was arrested, and confined in a dungeon of this château. The Trou du Cardinal is still shown, but it has lost all its terrors, for not only is it entered by a pretty pavilion in the garden, but a new flight of steps, and a new entrance, leads to it, the ancient ones being destroyed. As there is in the cell a very large chimney-piece, over which is the salamander of François I., it appears to me to be an error to suppose it ever was the prison; because it was occupied by many

étoit si rude qu'on ne diroit point à un valet les outrageuses et rudes paroles qu'il lui disoit, et si le craignoit tant le dit seigneur qu'il ne l'éut osé envoyer hors d'avec lui."

a merry party of the guards of the generous king, who would scarcely have been likely to choose a dungeon for a guard-room; and besides, it is not sufficiently deep underground. I suspect the real prison-house was far beneath, to judge by the aspect of the undoubted dungeon of Balue, at Loches, which we afterwards saw.

Either here, or near the spot, at all events, the miserable man languished out nine wretched years, pent, like a wild beast, in that iron cage whose celebrity is so fearfully known.

After the death of Louis, his successor, Charles VIII. soon abandoned a castle of which he had so many disagreeable recollections, in addition to which his eldest son died there at the age of three years.

In the great salle of Plessis les Tours the States General conferred on Louis XI. the honourable title of Father of his People, which posterity has since confirmed. The "mad fanatic," St. François de Paule, whom he had invited from Calabria, expired here in 1507, after which no further mention is made in history of the castle, except on the occasion of the interview between Henry III. and Henry IV. in 1589.

Leaving the castle, we proceeded, as directed, across some fields, and saw, at a distance, an extraordinary *congeries* of buildings, of all forms, amongst the irregular roofs of which rose a long, slight, and very antique-looking tower, behind which, partly built into a roof, appeared another of unequal height. A gable end to part off this mass had the appearance of a church wall, and, as we approached nearer, we found that we had reached that object of which we were in search, namely, the house of Olivier le Dain. Not only is the house curious in itself, but, by a singular coincidence, adjoining to it is still

an hotel, or, rather, cabaret, not bearing the title of the Fleur-de-Lis, as at the period when Maister Pierre conducted Quentin thither, but still a house of entertainment, where we saw soldiers sitting drinking. So wild and strange is the place that it would not seem an unfitting scene, even now, for some of the acts of Olivier le Diable, and we regretted that the style of the inmates did not permit us to enter and explore. Conveniently situated without the walls of the château, the wily barber could here readily receive his master's visits, and prowl about unobserved in the town and neighbourhood, collecting information everywhere, to be detailed to the fearful ear of the bigot and tyrant who condescended to employ such an instrument. This worthy he afterwards made *governor* of Loches! There are still some remains of ornament on the arches, and great appearance of strength in the entrance of this house. It appears to have been surrounded by a moat, but there are so many little gardens, and sheds, and cottages crowded round the towers that it is very difficult to trace its original dimensions.

Of the once-celebrated Abbey of Marmoutier, which held such unbounded sway over Touraine,

and was one of the richest and most renowned in France, scarcely a vestige remains, and it is probable that, in a short time, not even the walls which can now be traced, will exist, as it has long been employed as a manufactory, and the ground on which it stands is advertised to be sold for building. So important was this monastery, erected in the first age of Christianity, that its history is attached to most of the leading events in France, and even of Europe. About the year 370, St. Martin, the worthy bishop of Tours, founded Marmoutier, with the view of educating, under his own care, ministers worthy of enlightening the people, at that period plunged in the depths of idolatry; and, in a short time, so great was the reputation of these pious men, that most of the churches of France, and of the neighbouring states, sought to obtain directors from this celebrated convent. From age to age, the monks went on, obtaining from kings and popes the most important privileges. William the conqueror and his wife Matilda were their great benefactors, and every succeeding monarch, both Norman and French, delighted to load them with benefits: and the fleur-de-lis and the leopard appeared in the arms

of the convent with the mitre, the cross, and the keys.

This abbey lost nothing of its splendour under the sway of its *abbés commendataires*, among whom may be cited the Cardinals of Lorraine, de la Rochefoucauld, de Joyeuse, de Berulle, and de Richelieu. The latter divided his attention between the cares of the government of France, and that of the community confided to him: he re-established its discipline, and attached to it, in 1638, the monks of the learned congregation of St. Maur. It was at this period, more exclusively, that might be justly applied to this establishment the name of *grand Monastère*, or, in old French, *Maire-Moutier:* the new inmates caused it to be rebuilt with magnificence. The chapters general of the order were held there every three years, and no other, but that of Cluny, possessed so many nominations, or enjoyed so ample a revenue. Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Clermont, the last *abbé commendataire*, in 1740, resigned his command, and the archbishopric of Tours, with the consent of Louis XV. and Pope Clement XII. assumed it. All its rights, spiritual and temporal, were confided, after that time, to a grand prior.

At the time of the destruction of all religious establishments, this abbey had reached an extraordinary degree of splendour. A line of buildings connected with it extended from the summit of the *coteau* to the banks of the Loire, in a succession of sumptuous edifices, of various ages of architecture, so that it had the effect, at a distance, of a whole city; and the high walls which surrounded it, decorated with antique battlements, recalled the times of old, when every castle was a fortress, and every town a place of war.

But all the memories attached to its name, the saint whose bones reposed there, the long list of illustrious men who had distinguished it for learning and piety, nothing had power to defend this venerable pile from the general proscription, and all that the hand of time had spared for ages, the hand of man destroyed; of all those wondrous walls, only a mass of ruin remained, and by degrees these were removed, till scarcely a vestige can be traced. The few walls were, till lately, used as a brewery, and probably, in a few years or months, the glorious monastery of Marmoutier will be a mere tradition.

Fancy alone can now image the Repós de St. Martin, a retreat where the holy bishop used to meditate in silence and prayer, and consider the great duties of his office of instructor to those under his charge: or trace, in the rock, that famous chapel founded in 845, in honour of the Seven Sleepers.

Gregory of Tours recounts that twenty-five years after the death of St. Martin, seven of the monks of Marmoutier, to whom the bishop had announced their approaching end, fell on a sudden into a lethargic sleep, which, unaccompanied by any of the symptoms of dissolution, became eternal. For seven days their bodies were kept in this state, at the end of which time they were reverently placed in a grotto in the mountain, where they were exposed to the veneration of the pious, until the period of the destruction of Marmoutier by the Normans. In memory of this event, the third dignitary of the abbey bore the title of Prior of the Seven Sleepers.

In speaking of Marmoutier, the *Sainte Ampoule*, of great renown, must not be passed over unnoticed. This holy balm was brought by an

angel from Heaven, express, in order to be applied to the bruises of Saint Martin, who had fallen in his cell and was much injured. It was always, as so precious a remedy deserved, preserved with great care, and on the occasion of the coronation of Henri IV. at Chartres, in 1594, this holy oil was called into requisition, and administered to that *most Catholic* King, in consequence of the legitimate Ampoule of Rheims not being available, owing to that town being in the power of the League.

Great ceremony was observed in removing this precious unction from Marmoutier, and the city of Tours entered into a solemn engagement to restore it safely to the abbey.

The King, in testimony of his gratitude, and impressed, *of course*, with the utmost reverence for the miraculous treasure, independently of his subordinate pleasure in the triumph obtained over his foes, on returning it, added a rich emerald, which became henceforth attached to the Sainte Ampoule until 1791, when the deputies of this department thought fit to present it as an offering to Louis XVI.

The timber-work of the church, and the magni-

ficent staircase of the abbey, were remarkable for their great perfection, and seemed rather fitted for the abode of a mighty sovereign, than the retreat of *humble monks*. These were the last relics allowed to remain after the general destruction; but all is now entirely swept away.

CHAPTER VI.

The Jocose Friend.—Mont Louis.—Roche Corbon.—Moncontour.—Amboise.—Chenonceau.—Diana and Catherine.—Parallel.—Louise de Vaudemont.—The Cher.—Rousseau.—Rabelais.—The Grounds.

How could we resist our landlady's offer of a basket of the famous plums of Tours, although this year they, like all other fruit in this part of the country, were far from good? We accepted them with many thanks, and having secured places in the *coupé* to Amboise, we prepared for our departure.

In the morning we were disturbed by an unusual noise in the court-yard of the inn, round which the tower-shaped buildings of the antique house extended, connected in one part by a *flying corridor* on the exterior, which had a singular effect. We looked out and saw all the inmates,

servants as well as visitors, assembled on the steps, and in the passages opposite, occupied in observing the uproarious movements of an enormous heavy Norman horse, on which was mounted a traveller with his valise, evidently about to depart on a journey; but just as he was soberly enough quitting the yard, a jocose friend had been seized with a sudden desire to accompany him part of his way, and without announcing his intention, had *tout d'un coup* sprung up behind him, and was endeavouring to hold on in spite of the curvettings and plungings of the indignant steed, who was not, it appeared, antiquarian enough to relish this revival of the Templar mode of travelling. Shouts of laughter, screams, and clapping of hands, accompanied every movement of the trio; and nothing certainly could be more ludicrous than the whole set-out, more especially the delight expressed in all the eager countenances watching the event as if it had been some of the humours of Punch. After a considerable time, in which no struggles were spared on every side, the horse got the better, the "funny friend" was unseated, and the traveller rode clattering out of the court, followed by the shouts of the audience.

A calm immediately ensued, as is always the custom with the French, whose spirits, like their champagne, rise and subside with the same rapidity; all returned to the occupations they had left, the servants to their work, the mistress to her calculations, the *chef* to his fire, the visitors to their *déjeuner*, and the dogs to their kennels, and then it was possible to obtain an audience of some of the members of the establishment, whose ministry we required to transport our baggage to the church of St. Julien; where, in due time, we entered our diligence, and quitting the beautiful aisles and graceful roof, we followed half a dozen other vehicles, all starting at the same time, and took our way towards Amboise, having quitted Tours not more than an hour and a half after the time named, a custom as common here as in Normandy.

The road is flat and uninteresting for some distance out of Tours, but begins to improve at Mont Louis, a *long* village, formerly famous for the convocation of bishops called here by Henry II. in order to reconcile him to Thomas à Becket, who very *shortly after this* was murdered. Here again begin the mysterious caves which had before so much surprised us, and by degrees the

beauties which we trembled to have lost came back upon our path. The Escalier St. George, connecting the valley with the hills, came out in picturesque effect; the Château de Rougemont, crowning the height above Marmoutier, of the materials of which it is built, was glowing in the setting sun; and the isolated Lanterne de Roche Corbon darted suddenly up into the stormy sky from its base of rocks on the opposite bank of the still sand-encumbered Loire, as if pointing to the approaching thunder clouds. This quadrangular pillar is a very striking object rising from a confused mass of antique and tottering walls, which, with the rudely piled rocks that support them, seem threatening to fall and further choke up the river. These are all the *restes* of the Château des Roches possessed at the end of the tenth century by Corbon, the first Lord of Touraine, who employed in his titles the formula, "Par la grace de Dieu,"—"moi, Corbon, par la grace de Dieu, vassal du Seigneur et Seigneur moi-même," and who gave his name to the castle. Robert, his grandson, in 1095 built the pillar-like tower now remaining, for the purpose, it is conjectured, of communicating by signals with the tower of Amboise.

Moncontour, though not historically interesting, has its effect in the picture; and the wild shores and islands continually occurring, covered with a thick growth of willows, looked romantic and strange amidst the changing light which illumined them. Before we reached Amboise the rain had become incessant, and a dense grey mist shut out the opposite banks as if a veil had been cast over them; we could only observe that, as the shore rises on one side it uniformly sinks on the other, which gives constant variety and liveliness to the scene: the narrow stream, which is all the Loire allows here, was sometimes visible on one side and sometimes on the other, now broader and fuller, and now diminishing almost to a thread along its broad bed of sand.

We were most happy in being driven to the Boule d'Or at Amboise, where we arrived in the rain and dark, and crossed a moat to the courtyard, at one side of which, in the indistinct light, we observed a huge round tower, and imagined we were entering the château itself. All was neatness and cleanliness in the hotel, and civility and *empressement* from the young hostess, who assured us her husband, who was himself

chef, had come from Paris, and was *au fait* at any description of cookery. We had no reason, from the refinement of his manners, to doubt that he had come from the capital, but as the mere air of Paris does not make cooks, in that particular he might as well have never left the towers of Amboise. However, good will made up for other deficiencies, and good beds, which it is rare in France not to find, made us perfectly content, particularly when, on opening our window the next morning, we saw immediately before us the identical tower of which we had a glimpse in the evening, and which was built into a series of sheds used for coach-houses, kept perfectly clean, and exhibiting the strangest combination of domestic architecture it is possible to conceive. Beyond the roofs of the opposite house, but extremely near, the high majestic tower and belfry of St. Florentin's church appeared; and there were the moat and bridge which we had crossed on entering, and beyond, a lofty range of fine trees, which form the boulevard next the river, and make a charming walk. As the morning was brilliant and balmy, and the weather was so uncertain, we resolved, before we indulged ourselves in exploring Amboise—which

promised much, and reminded us of our regretted and favourite Saumur, from its situation and its heights,—to take a carriage and set out for Chenonceau, that object of so much interest and curiosity to all strangers.

Chenonceau is four leagues from Amboise, and the drive is beautiful: we passed the Obelisque of Chanteloup, proposing to visit that admired spot on another occasion, and pursued our way, in a very clean, easy vehicle—a circumstance worthy of record—through the ancient monastic-looking village of St. Croix. From this bourg the road turns off from that leading to Bléré, and the cross-road commenced, which is very good, being direct to Montrichard, and much frequented. Here began the most delicious scenery of a simple and rural character; on one side thymy coteaux, occasionally rocky, with myriads of caves, inhabited as usual; on the other, a wide expanse of vineyard of the rich black grape, now approaching to perfection, the leaves changing to brilliant crimson and purple from their former vivid green, and the thick heavy clusters hanging down to the earth, which seemed all laden with the abundant harvest. Beautiful groves of trees succeeded, the chestnuts most

luxuriant and lovely, and light and graceful foliage on each side of the road, which seemed like a drive in a private park.

At a neat, but rather precipitous village, we heard the sound of music, and presently came up with a very gay and numerous wedding procession, preceded by fiddles. The bride's cap was ornamented with a garland of orange-flowers and silver ribbon; the bridegroom had a large silver rosette with long floating ends fixed on his breast, and all the party carried magnificent bouquets: every one was in full costume and scrupulously new and clean; they walked in pairs to the primitive looking church, where our driver passed them rather unceremoniously, not apparently enjoying the loitering pace at which we had made him proceed; perhaps he had some deeper motive, for he evidently regarded the ceremony with impatience, and we therefore set him down as a disappointed swain. The approach to the château of Chenonceau is by a long avenue of young trees, and although its modern effect a little destroys the ideas rising in the mind on nearing the Castle of Diana, it is nevertheless pretty. By degrees a few towers rise on the view, and presently you come in sight of the

beautiful building somewhat obscured at this point by the enormous detached antique tower that guards it, and which seems to have lost a brother which should answer it on the other side.

The castle has been built at various periods, and is the only one in the department of Indre and Loire which remains entire with all its recollections fresh about it. Its origin may be traced to the thirteenth century, when it was only a simple manor-house belonging to a family of Auvergne. A descendant of this family, Jean Marques, sold it about the end of the fifteenth century to Thomas Boyer, mayor of Tours in 1497, and general of finance in Normandy. Boyer may be considered as the true founder of Chenonceau, which he built in the centre of the river Cher, with a magnificence truly regal. His cipher and devices are to be seen on the entrance tower, on the walls, and in the chapel of the château. Here this great financier had frequently the honour of receiving the king and court, on occasion of the many hunting excursions in which they indulged. His son, who is represented as vain and frivolous, thinking to secure the royal favour, offered Chenonceau to the Duchesse de

Valentinois, who was extremely desirous of possessing it. From this period it became a royal residence, and the beautiful Diana its presiding genius. She built the bridge over the Cher to accommodate her royal lover when he returned from hunting in the forest of Loches, and lavished all the resources of her taste and genius to render this abode delightful and unique.

Although for some time Diana enjoyed with her lover the creations of her fancy, and must have passed some of the most delightful years of her life here, she was not destined to continue its mistress; but, being in a manner compelled to exchange it with her rival the Queen, on the death of Henri II, for the château of Chaumont on the Loire, Catherine resolved to outdo all that had been done before, and to make the long-triumphant favourite forgotten in her superior magnificence.

Although, as far as regards the worth of either of these celebrated women, there is probably little to choose between the cruel, vindictive, unnatural, and bigoted Catherine, and the no less bigoted and persecuting Diana, who perhaps in hypocrisy alone excelled her rival, since, though unfaithful to her husband, she could erect

to his memory a magnificent tomb, on which she is herself represented weeping as a Magdalen, but carried on the farce to the end of wearing *widow's* mourning while she was openly living with the husband of another: in spite of this, the recollection of the fascinating mistress bears the belle over that of the "Jesabel,"* whose name is another word for wickedness; and at Chenonceau, the frail beauty is more interesting than the harsh queen.

* After the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the following lines were stuck up in every part of France:

L'on demande la convenance
De Catherine et Jesabel,
L'une reine d'Israel,
L'autre reine de la France.
L'une étoit de malice extreme,
Et l'autre est la malice même;
Enfin le jugement est tel
Par une vengeance divine,
Les chiens mangerent Jesabel,
La charogne de Catherine,
Sera different en ce point,
Car les chiens n'en voudront point!

The murders that Catherine is accused of, with too great probability, are a fearful list:—Queen Jane of Navarre; her own son, Charles IX; the Vidame de Chartres; the Secretary Lomenie; Du Guast, favourite of Henri III; and others, ad infinitum.

More worthy, though perhaps insignificant in character, is the widow of her favourite son, the infamous and vicious Henri III. Poor Louise de Vaudemont retired to this place after the murder of her husband, whom she could regret! and spent the remainder of her sad life in sorrow, and acts of what to her seemed piety. The chambers she principally occupied have still the sombre character she imprinted on them, and her grey and black ornaments are still preserved. One can feel but little sympathy in her grief for a wretch so degraded as her husband, who was so universally detested by his subjects, that when Clement's crime had extinguished his hateful existence, so great was the general joy that the people put on *green* mourning, *la livrée des fous*, and Madame de Montpensier, the daughter of the murdered Duke de Guise, distributed green scarfs to all, openly rejoicing in the event; *feux de joie* were made, also, everywhere. The preachers called Clement a martyr, who died to deliver France from a tyrant. It was the custom to express public opinion by verses, which were posted in different parts; the following, not remarkable

for their poetical merit, were read by all the populace of Paris:

> Un jeune Jacobin, nommé Jacques Clement,
> Dans le bourg de St. Cloud une lettre presente
> A Henri de Valois et *vertueussement*
> Un couteau fort pointu dans l'estomac lui plante.

Louise de Vaudemont applied to Henri IV. that an investigation of the murder should take place, for several persons of the highest rank did not attempt to conceal their participation; but Henri judged it best for all parties to let it rest, and Clement alone was the sacrifice, as he deserved to be.

Over the chimney of the room of Louise is the inscription *Sævi monumenta doloris.* The tapestry of the chamber was black, strewed with tears in white, but is now replaced by grey and black. The compartments of the ceiling are, however, the same as in her time, black and grey, elegantly carved; the canopy is of black velvet, and is of a remarkably beautiful form, the cushions grey and black brocade, with H and L interlaced, though all is not the original furniture; some of it has been carefully copied and reproduced, and the effect

is singularly *triste* and solemn. The room is in one of the towers looking to the Cher, and the little library adjoining was her oratory; it is fitted up with choice books, and contains some curious pictures, and is the prettiest *boudoir study* in the world.

It was at Chenonceau that Henri IV. paid a visit to Louise de Vaudemont, to inform her of the project of marriage between her relation, Mademoiselle de Mercœur with César de Vendôme, the eldest of his children by Gabrielle. This union was celebrated at Angers, and the queen dowager gave up to the young people, after her death, the right to Chenonceau. Thus it passed into the family of Vendôme, afterwards into that of Condé, by whom it was sold to M. Dupin, a fermier-general; it is still the property of one of his descendants, M. le Comte de Villeneuve.

During the retreat of the melancholy Louise, the château became almost a religious establishment; at least, a part of it was arranged for the monks of the severe order of Capuchins, whom she had invited, and that portion was separated from the rest by a drawbridge: after her death these monks established at Tours the con-

vent of Capuchins, which formerly existed on the Place d'Aumont.

> Quels souvenirs divers, consacrés d'âge en âge
> Viennent s'offrir à nous dans ces lieux enchanteurs !
> C'est ici que d'un roi, fixant le tendre hommage,
> Diane, a cinquante ans enchaînait tous les cœurs ;
> De son pouvoir long-temps rivale malheureuse,
> Médici y formait ses coupables projets !
> Du foible Henri Trois l'épouse vertueuse
> Y vint ensevelir ses douloureux regrets.

These verses have the merit of giving a picture in little of this abode of celebrated women.

After pausing to admire the large tower which you are informed was built "par les Anglois," an universal resource when a date is unknown, the portal and exterior walls of which are finely ornamented with the initials T. B.* introduced frequently, and with additional decorations of the time of Francis I, you are conducted through a row of fine orange trees up the handsome flight of steps by which you cross the third moat, which leads to the principal entrance, where an enormous salamander, in stone, sprawls above the

* The singular and somewhat inexplicable device of M. Boyer the financier of Charles VIII. and his two successors, which may be found everywhere, is, *S'il vient à point, il m'en soverra* (souviendra).

door, which is, however, fine and massive. You enter a somewhat gloomy but grand vaulted hall, the walls of which are covered with warlike trophies, and at the extremity, a gigantic gilded salamander writhes in golden flames: the constant recurrence of this device, and on a large scale, is tedious, and the taste rather questionable. Chambers succeed each other all filled with furniture, tapestry, decorations, marbles, pictures, each called by the name of the particular person who occupied the suite. Francis I. has several dedicated to him, and most interesting: his devices and crowned F, being embroidered on the rich satin chairs, sofas, and hangings; the tables round covered with antiques and delicate works of art, collected by himself, and arranged in these identical places. The enamels of Léonard de Limoges, a favourite enameller of Francis, who gave him the direction of the fabrique at Limoges, appear in profusion, together with the exquisite works of that original genius Bernard Palizzi,* to whom the

* Bernard Palizzi has been, by some, erroneously considered as the first Frenchman who discovered the art of enamelling on china; but though he may not lay claim to the invention, the great perfection to which he brought the art,

invention of enamelling on china, in France, is generally allowed; at least, a particular sort which occurs frequently among the treasures of Chenonceau, many of which are to be found in the

gives him as high renown as though he had. He was born in the Agenois, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, of poor parents, and till nearly forty years of age followed the profession of a land surveyor, and the occupation of painting on glass, and fabricating pottery: living at Saintes with his numerous family, occupied with chemical experiments, and observing the wonders of natural history, with no guide or instructor but nature and his talents, when, in 1539, as he relates, the sight of a round *enamelled earthen* cup disturbed his whole existence. This cup was, doubtless, the production of some chemical artist of Ravenna, or *Faenza;* the fine enamelled sculptures of the brothers *della Robbia* had already obtained celebrity in Florence and all Italy. No sooner did he behold this marvel of art, than he resolved to perform something equal or superior to it, and for that purpose devoted the whole energies of his genius to accomplish the desired object. For *fifteen* long years he strove to overcome all the difficulties that beset him, contending with poverty and care; and became so reduced by application and anxiety, that his body appeared a perfect skeleton. All the reputation he then acquired was that of a madman, who was ruining his family, committing all kinds of strange acts, such as burning his furniture, even to the planks of his house, and consuming his life by inches in order to be able to colour bits of clay *in the Italian manner!* It was about this same period, 1546, that Cellini was acting in a somewhat similar manner at Florence, when he cast all his two hundred vessels of brass,

museums of Paris, and more particularly at that emporium of all that is curious and interesting

no doubt covered with the elaborate work of years, into the furnace, in order to secure the success of his immortal statue of Perseus!

So resolute was Palizzi that his work should be worth its price, that, in spite of threats and remonstrances, he threw back into the furnace a part which he considered but half successful, and, having done so, reflected with deep sadness on the exhausted resources of his family, and his want of success. With the most liberal candour he relates, in his own memoirs, all the means he took, and warns others to avoid his mistakes; his great desire being, that his discovery should be useful to his countrymen.

It was, doubtless, during this forced interruption to his attempts, that having resumed his occupation of surveyor and glass painter, he executed, for the château of Ecouen, then building, the fine windows of the Psyche and the arabesques after the designs of il Rosso; and at this period became known to the Constable Anne de Montmorency, then all powerful, for whom he painted, at a later time, some fine pictures on china, and the magnificent flooring of Ecouen. The protection of the Constable saved his life when he was condemned to be burnt as a heretic, in 1560, and he went to Paris, where he established himself under the title of "*Inventeur des rustiques figulines du roi, de la reine mère et du connétable de Montmorency.*" He was lodged in the Tuileries, from whence he is frequently called *Bernard des Tuileries.* Catherine de Medici seems, as well as her sons, to have afforded him her protection; his chemical knowledge seems to have been as distinguished as his talent for painting in this peculiar style,

in art, connected with the middle ages, the valuable musée of the Hotel Cluny.

The peculiar style to which I allude, is the

and he gave courses of lectures in Paris on these subjects, the first ever established. Voltaire turns them, most unjustly, into ridicule, and treats him as a *charlatan*, and a visionary, in which he is not borne out by fact.

It would appear that he owed to his reputation, or to the relenting humour of Charles IX, his preservation on the fatal eve of St. Bartholomew.

His great and unassisted acquirements in many branches of science, gained him the respect and consideration of all, and his noble and honest character, and the justness of his views, made him numerous friends; although it is remarkable that he was bold in asserting his religious opinions at a time when persecution was at its height, and in waging war with the professors of the false science of astrology, alchemy, witchcraft, &c., then held in such esteem. This conduct of course attracted the malice of many interested persons, and he was accordingly arrested in 1588, by order of the *Seize*, and he must have fallen a victim but for the Duc de Mayenne, who had him shut up in the Bastile, where he died, in 1589, *aged ninety*. His reply to Henri III. who came to him in prison, is worthy of his life. "My good friend," said the king, "if you do not accommodate yourself a little to necessity in matters of religion, I am constrained to leave you in the hands of your enemies;" to which he heroically replied, "Sire, I was already prepared to give my life for the glory of God; if I had felt any regret at doing so, all would at once have disappeared when I heard so great a king pronounce the words, '*I am constrained.*' It is what you, sire, nor any of those who constrain you, could never effect on me, for I know how to die."

representation, in high relief, of reptiles, swimming or crawling, in vases and plateaux, which, filled with water, appear, on the slightest motion, to be endowed with life. The brilliant colours of this china, its foliage, the scales of its fish, snakes, and lizards, and the flowers and weeds round them are all admirable, though not particularly pleasing, perhaps, on a dinner table.

Venice glasses, painted and enamelled, are also seen, and the carved cabinets are of the finest order. There are several pieces of tapestry, and some pictures which, from the costume, must be as early as the time of Charles VI; indeed, it would be almost endless to enumerate the treasures contained in this delightful place. The bed, undisturbed, of Catherine; a splendid marble chimney-piece, worthy of a Medici; her bath, and the fine furniture of her room, remain, with her initials worked on all the satin, as in other apartments. The most conspicuous initials, however, are the D and H, interlaced in every possible manner, and covering the walls and filling the panels: the picture, full length, of Diana, said to be by Primatice, holds a conspicuous place in one chamber. It

is extremely lovely, and represents her as the goddess Diana, setting out for the chase: there is a happy mixture, in the dress, of the classical and the costume of the period, which marks the time, and yet does not shock the imagination. She is stepping along with graceful swiftness, her head rather turned, as if listening; she holds a hound and her bow; her head is, as usual, crowned with a crescent; the hair flies lightly on the air; her bodice is tight to the shape and laced, the waist rather long and pointed; her full petticoat is of rich stuff, with gold embroidery, but it hangs in fine folds, and her springing foot is advanced. The landscape is spirited and good, the colouring well preserved, and the whole picture admirable. This is the most remarkable portrait of Diana, though there are others.

In one room is a medallion of the head of Agnes Sorel, copied from her tomb, and, in the library, a most extraordinary enamel, representing her seated behind the king, Charles VII, on a clumsy horse, Darby and Joan fashion: she is there hideous, and her royal lover looks like an old monk with a cowl on. Near it is a fine and, evidently, correct mask, in plaster, of Henry

IV, taken from his face after death; it has an expression of pain, and is so real as to be very distressing. There is, also, an autograph letter of his.

A singular portrait, characteristic, but not handsome, of Isabeau de Bavière, and of Charles V, VI, and VII.; Charles V. of Spain, Titian's Francis I, and a portrait of Marguerite de Valois, remarkably like her brother. The collection of portraits, so numerous and so singular, reminded me of the treasures which cover the walls of Knole. The fine gallery, built on piles and arches over the Cher, is full of pictures, of all dates and ages, and medallions of celebrated persons; amongst others is a Ninon, the most beautiful I ever saw, and giving a better idea than we usually have of her fascinations; a Madame de Sevigné, holding Madame de Grignan's picture; and a host of others, some copies, some, probably, originals. A very curious pair, which, I think and hope, are genuine, of Petrarch and Laura, as both are worthy of their reputation.

The view from this fine gallery is exquisite. The clear waters of the sparkling Cher flow under its arches, the fine park slopes down to the verdant banks on one side, and rich mea-

dows on the other, varied and beautiful trees crowd along the margins, and in the distance is seen the pretty bridge and white sails flitting on the bosom of the abounding waters, blue coteaux form the background of the picture, and all is harmony and grace.

The theatre is left precisely as it was when Jean Jacques had his Dévin du Village played here. He was an inmate of Chenonceau, whose beauties he has sung, and it is recorded that the intellectual and charming Madame Dupin, the mistress of the château, whose son he instructed, is the only person, throughout his career, who escaped the bitterness of his ingratitude, and was uniformly named by him with respect. As I confess to being, at all times, unable to get up any enthusiasm for Rousseau, the thought always intruding,—

" What a pity a man of such exquisite notions
Should send his poor brats to the Foundling, my dear !"

I looked with little reverence on the dusty forms and stools, and faded scenery. This, however, is doubtless a sacred spot to the lovers of the author of Héloïse, and, perhaps, as worthy to afford delight as the relics of monarchs and their

favourites, round whom time has cast a halo of glory, which, *en leur vivant*, they little deserved.

There are some fine antique busts, and a few good pictures of masters, but our attention was drawn away from these by the historical memories scattered through every room. A very lovely portrait engaged our sympathy, particularly. It is that of a very young and delicate girl, in a semi-monastic habit, with the sweetest and saddest expression I ever beheld. There must be some story attached to such a face. She is named as Louise de Portugal, princess of Braganza, and is said to be a nun of Evora.

A very curious picture exhibits a tournament at the time of Henry II. entirely filled with armed knights, and ladies,

> Whose bright eyes
> Rain influence and adjudge the prize.

One fair lady has risen from amongst a group, and is placing a scarf round the neck of a kneeling knight. The costumes are quaint and good, and the grouping tolerable, the colouring very fresh, and the whole a valuable specimen of art at the period, though quaint and stiff, as all then were but the works of the wonderful *masters* of the time.

There is a portrait of Rabelais,* expressively ugly. We were amused to find that, at half-a-dozen towns hereabouts, the honour is claimed of being the birth-place of Rabelais.

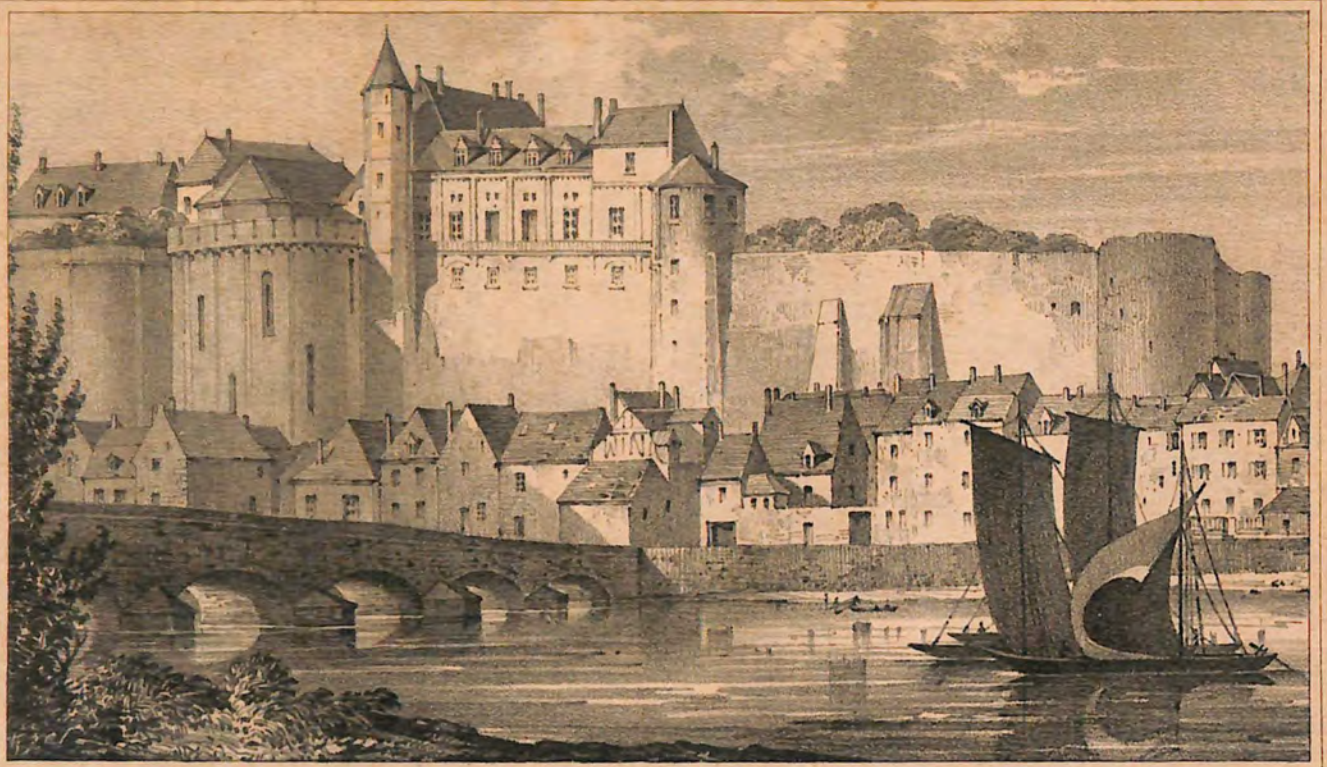
Whether that extraordinary satirist ever resided here cannot be known, but Chenonceau appears in all times to have been the abode of genius and taste, and to have been more or less celebrated by all. J. J. Rousseau, Fontenelle, Buffon, Tressan, Montesquieu, Sainte Palaye, and Voltaire, have been visitors within its walls.

The grounds which surround the château are finely laid out and extensive, more resembling English shrubberies and walks than any we had seen; the shaded winding ways by the charming river are delightful, and great variety and taste are displayed in their arrangements. There are some enchanting strolls for summer weather, and they must be most enjoyable. The family

* François Rabelais was born in 1483, not actually at Chinon, where his father followed the profession of an apothecary, but about a league from that place, at a farm, called la Devinière, in the commune of Seuilly. It was in the abbey of Seuilly that he began his studies.

In the King's library, at Paris, is a drawing representing the interior of the chamber occupied by Rabelais at Chinon, Rue la Lamproie.

who now occupy Chenonceau, seem to appreciate its beauties, for they inhabit it nine months of the year, quitting it for Tours or Paris during the remainder. Tours seems considered a sort of metropolis to the Loire, where everything can be got, and everybody can be met with.



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CHATEAU d'AMBOISE on the LOIRE.

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CHAPTER VII.

A carriage.—The Heights.—Castle Gardens.—Chapel of St. Hubert.—Louis Philippe.—The Town of Amboise, and Château.—The Family of Babou.—St. Denis.—Les Gréniers de César.—Chanteloup.

We quitted Chenonceau with regret, and returned to Amboise: on our way we met a carriage, which attracted our attention as a phenomenon rarely met with: indeed we were inclined to think that it must have been, at most, *the second* we had seen since we began our travels from Normandy, and I certainly cannot remember another. On our arrival at our Boule d'Or, it was announced to us that an English family had arrived and had set off for Chenonceau; this, then, accounted for so strange an apparition: we had more than half suspected as much before. We found it was

Sir William Follet and his family, travelling in search of health, which we afterwards rejoiced to hear he had obtained. They were, however, unlucky in the weather, for, brilliant as it was early in the day, it came on to rain violently about this very time, and, with delicious intervals, so continued for several days.

The sun was brilliant and cheering when we set out for the heights above Amboise and mounted so rugged and precipitous a street, that we began to despair of reaching the top: we were encouraged, however, by several people, who answered our questions very civilly, but appeared surprised to see strangers in such a part of their town, which, but for the spirit of curiosity, that led us everywhere, would be unsought: the houses are ill-built and dirty, the streets ill-paved, and the inhabitants dirty, and not healthy-looking—the poorer sort positively wretched, and many beggars. We continued to ascend till we reached a cottage situated on an eminence, where we inquired if the castle could be reached that way. The owner smiled, and told us that we had contrived to make our walk fifty times as long as needful, but if we went on we should be allowed to pass through a vineyard, and get on

the downs which led to it. This we did, pleased to have thus, by chance, procured one of the most agreeable walks imaginable. The vine-yard we entered was teeming with rich ripe grapes, of various kinds, both purple and golden; and from that spot a magnificent view of the town and country round is obtained. An old woman was busied amongst the grapes, who laughed good-humouredly at our having mistaken her property for a public path, but very kindly indicated to us the way we should go — by the "great Fountain," till a "petit quart de lieue," should bring us to the castle gates.

Exquisitely fresh and bright were the downs along which we proceeded, with a fine wide prospect for leagues, and the town below, with all its towers and spires, by distance made more admirable. The undulating hills and trees shut out the castle from us, which, though on the height, is thus sheltered, and which is seen best from the bridge. The dark masses of forest, extending for leagues, told where lay mysterious Loches, whither we proposed shortly to go; the purple heath and various wild flowers springing up beneath our feet, accompanied us all the way, and changes of scenery broke on our view at

every hundred yards. "This," we exclaimed, "should have been Tours, and then we could well understand all the praises lavished on its flat uninteresting plain, without a *coteau* to break the dreary monotony." So angry were we with Tours, that we never lost an opportunity of saying something uncivil of it when we came to other scenery which has been passed over by *its* admirers.

We wandered on, regardless of the threatening clouds, which gave new beauties to the landscape by the fitful gleams of light they permitted to escape, till we reached a dry moat and bridge, which, crossing, we found no "proud porter rearing himself thereat," and therefore, like the merchant in the fairy tale, pushed open the unresisting gate and found ourselves amongst a paradise of flowers. An immense platform, beautifully cultivated and adorned with bowers and groves and parterres, from its peculiar form revealed its former destination: it was the site of an enormous round tower, which had been levelled, and its base now held a garden, while an ornamental balustrade, which attracted us, led down a twisted stair to a deep well, at the bottom of what had been a turret. As we continued to stray in

this quiet, solitary, but cultivated region, we came every here and there to masses of brick work and huge stone walls; to deep ravines descending into what had been moats, into which, in former times, the waters of the rivers Amasse and the Loire could be introduced to form a defence; to broad and fearfully suspended bridges spanning the abyss now filled up with flowering shrubs and graceful trees, but through which the enormous bastions would frown as still asserting their power. From spot to spot all lovely and romantic, we came at last to an inner garden, more carefully planted, where long ranges of orange trees told the front of the château was hard by; and soon we saw its long extent, which has no very particular claim to admiration, being modern, and rebuilt from time to time, more with a view to convenience than ornament. Hitherto we had met no human being of whom to inquire whether we were trespassing, and began to expect "the beast" would start out upon us if we went on much further. Presently we saw a portly gentleman in a negligent undress and slippers lounging along amongst the roses:—this might be the "governor" himself!—we accosted him, and he set us instantly at our ease,

agreeing that our entrance was an unusual proceeding, but assuring us no one would take exception at our conduct.

Unwilling to forego the charm of walking in this lovely place, we continued our way till we found ourselves in a grove beside one of the most exquisite little chapels that could be conceived by a poet. It was as perfect as if built yesterday, and so delicate was the colour of the stone that we felt convinced it had been recently restored, yet the dilapidated state of the painted windows contradicted the belief.

We were satisfied, however, of the fact by a young artist, who was seated before the chapel sketching with exquisite precision the large entablature over the portal, representing the miracle of St. Hubert and the angelic stag, with all his train of hunters and dogs, and the cross beaming between the horns of the heaven-sent animal to convert him from his infidelity. It appears that Louis Philippe, to whose family the castle of Amboise belongs, has had this beautiful chapel restored with great care from drawings which were preserved of the original form, as it had for many years been deformed by an ugly roof and additions, and had supplied what was want-

ing of the painted glass; but unfortunately a tremendous hail storm in the last spring has destroyed great part of the windows, which are all now to do again. This storm had also broken every pane of glass in a large oval room over the great tower, which looks to the river, and desolated the castle in all directions.

The interior of this bijou of a chapel is the most exquisite specimen possible of the Gothic architecture of the middle ages. The roof is fretted with finely wrought pendants; the walls and arches are incrusted with ornaments so delicately carved as to resemble lace work; grotesque figures of the minutest size are introduced amongst the foliage of the friezes, which are varied beyond description. The restorations are admirably done, and the altars, and some marble figures in niches, in the best taste. When finished, it will be quite unique, and does infinite credit to the taste of the King, whose liberality and desire to introduce improvement are conspicuous in every town we have passed through from Caen to Amboise. If the French can restrain their craving for glory, and manage to be content with prosperity and with an improved country, they will not oppose the measures of their present

ruler, who makes himself acquainted with the wants of every town in his dominions; and to know, with him is to act. It is impossible to deny all the good he is doing; the facts speak for themselves in the erection of splendid buildings, the clearing of filthy old streets and replacing them by commodious and neat houses, pavements, walls, bridges, roads,—all the appearances which the traveller hails at every town, and which proclaim the increased power of the subject and the generous assistance of the monarch.

The interior of the château is all modern, and the apartments kept for the royal family furnished in the simplest manner. Except the Duke of Orleans and his Duchess, who lately spent a few days here on their way to the South, where the Duke was to embark for Africa, none of the family had ever been to Amboise. This visit will probably not, however, be the last, as both were delighted with this charming place, and orders for repairs and alterations have been left, which promises a return at no great distance of time. Most of the other apartments are occupied by persons who have obtained the privilege of residing here; some, pensioners of the crown, or of the family of Orleans.

The town of Amboise is celebrated in history as the scene of the event called "la Conjuration d'Amboise," against the Guises in 1560, and also for the institution by Louis XI. of the order of St. Michel, which soon fell into degradation. It was possessed from the eleventh century by the illustrious house of Amboise, whose possessions comprised Montrichard, Bléré, Thouars, and Chaumont. The lordship of Amboise was confiscated in 1431 by Charles VII., and annexed to the domain of the crown. Louis XV. exchanged it with the Duc de Choiseul, who had just purchased Chanteloup. To this then powerful minister much of the embellishment of the town is owing.

Francis II. was the last French king who inhabited the château, but as no vestige remains of times gone by but the walls, there is no relic of any monarch whatever, nor of the beautiful Mary Stuart, who must have lived here, and whose portrait, I had heard, was at Chenonceau, but could not find it. Very much of the ancient part has been destroyed; indeed the walls and vaulted ways, too strong to be demolished, are almost all that remain: some of these are attributed to the Romans. One

of the entrances is called la Porte de César; another, called la Porte des Lions, supposed to be of the age of Clovis, exists no longer. The fortifications are immense, and the fossés tremendous, though much is now filled up.

Charles VIII. was born here, and here met with the accident which caused his death. On his return from Naples, he brought with him Italian artists, under whose direction a great part of the castle was built; and doubtless the beautiful chapel of St. Hubert owes its existence to their taste. The towers he built are ninety feet high and forty-two in diameter; there is a broad winding way within by which a carriage can easily ascend from the gate in the town to the platform above. It is a very surprising work, and so well arranged, that, though the towers are of such immense height, the road offers little difficulty from its steepness. The Duke of Orleans was extremely pleased with this singular method of egress, and walked down on his departure from the castle; the lower part, beyond the entrance-gate, which still descends many feet, had been blocked up; he desired that it might all be opened, and the whole properly arranged, which was in the course

of performance when we saw it. The gateway itself is peculiarly fine, and of an unusual style of architecture, very grand and imposing. Louis XII. made several additions to the building, and those who followed did the same; but few of their embellishments are to be traced now.

The church of St. Florentin, whose modern tower peeped at us in our inn-court, has nothing whatever to attract attention; the exterior is so much defaced, and the whole appearance so neglected and gloomy. The interior is without interest, mere whitewashed walls, with

neither arches nor pillars; but in a niche, transported from the church of Bon Desir, where it was first placed, is a tomb so remarkable, that we could not but remain a long time examining it. It represents Christ in the tomb, surrounded by the holy women, St. John, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. These figures, larger than life, are executed in terracotta by one of the Italian artists who followed Francis I. from Italy, and exhibit a whole generation of the family of Babou de la Bourdaisière. The four women, all handsome, and dressed with great taste, are said to be striking resemblances of Marie Gaudin, wife of Philibert Babou, and her three daughters, who successively became mistresses to *le Roi Chevalier!* Francis I, tradition says, is figured in St. John, though I confess there appears to me not the slightest likeness to his very remarkable countenance; I should rather imagine it to be another of the same family: and Babou the father's portrait is in the recumbent figure.

It seems difficult to imagine hypocrisy and profaneness carried to a higher degree. This family appears illustrious in seeking its own dishonour: Gabrielle d'Estrée was a descendant. It is re-

ported that the last of the race was living in an obscure part of the town, a few years ago, as a porter. It would seem that the favour of kings, obtained at any sacrifice, had not served to preserve the prosperity of this family, whose moral degradation had been begun long before, but had ended its career of worldly honour in the lowest grade of society.

The figures are painted, and richly gilt, the fringes and ornaments superb; but, like all these things, even the beautiful execution of the work does not redeem it from a certain meanness and tawdry appearance which impresses the beholder rather as an exhibition of wax-work, than as a superior work of art.

The first time we went we were literally driven out of the church by the importunity of several disgusting beggars, to whom having given a trifle, others succeeded, till we could bear it no longer. Several of these pious individuals were kneeling before the tomb of the "*virtuous* Babous, which looks like an altar as it is arranged, and doubtless were invoking the aid of those immaculate characters, with the supreme powers:" their priests did not appear to have taken the trouble of undeceiving them. Having watched

our tormentors out of sight, we returned to examine this group more at our leisure, and were again worried almost past endurance by a market-woman, who was the only person in the church, having slipped in to say a short prayer, and amuse herself with observing our movements at the same time. She insisted on knowing the story of the tomb, which she had heard, she said, various accounts of, and seemed proud of as belonging to her town; but *le curé* appeared to have strangely puzzled himself and her by an account of the personages; one female figure, with a box of precious ointment, as Magdalen, passing in her mind for St. John. I asked her to consult the evidence of her eyes, and whether such a costume, braided hair with jewels, an embroidered gown with rich ceinture, and bracelets on the plump arms, had at all a manly appearance? "Ah! mais," said she, still unconvinced, "ils sont tous des Saints à ce que m'a dit Monsieur le Curé, et il ne faut pas en douter!"

The old church of St. Denis is very curious in the interior, though modern externally. The pillars are of the earliest and rudest Gothic, and the ornaments of some of the capitals are the most grotesque I had ever seen, the bizarre

figures so extravagant and large, as to be irresistibly ludicrous. Crowned female faces, joined to fish's tails, with other nondescript fanning tails growing out of their feathered backs, are attached to a wreath of leaves, which terminates in another figure, bird-shaped, with a pantaloon-like mask, looking towards the female creature: birds, whose tails end in large palmy leaves, and whose beaks turn up like a ridiculously caricatured nose: in short, all that can be imagined of absurd is clustered together to form the richest and most effective capitals to the fine bold pillars which support the roof.

A part of the town of Amboise is called *Vieille Rome*, and antiquaries may find food for inquiry in many of the remains. We were directed to the Gréniers de César, and proceeded along the side of the river, passing a great many well-built handsome houses with gardens, and the fine *coteau* rising above the roofs, to a certain mansion kept by Madame Veuve Boudant, whose "*valet de chambre*" we were directed, by our hostess of the Boule d'Or, to ask for, as it was his province to show the caves which exist on the premises of his mistress. We strolled into the open court of the house, and looked

about for our destined guide, whom we discovered sitting in a dark niche, and whistling gaily as he cleaned his boots and shoes—rather a singular employment for a lady's page. With great readiness he dismissed his blacking-brush, and lighting a candle, led the way through a desolate shrubbery to the mouth of the caves, which we entered, and were surprised to see a fine chamber cut in the rock, round which were ranged a great number of barrels and different vessels, which our guide informed us, with a sigh, had been so arranged by his late master, who, having property in the West Indies, had proposed establishing here a manufactory of sugar, as these Roman caves presented so excellent a *locale* for the purpose. Just as everything was ready, he was seized with an illness which carried him off, and left his plans unexecuted. So high, and wide, and large, and long, and dry, is this chamber, that one might imagine a handsome *ball-room*, which, well lighted, would have a magnificent effect; there are three tiers of arches, one above the other to the arched roof, apparently intended as receptacles for corn; a staircase conducts to each tier, and, as all is perfectly sharp and fresh, it has the appearance of

having been recently hewn out of the rock. A small chamber beyond, leads, by a spiral stair, to others above, and the caves, I am told, extend for some distance, and are all equally warm, dry, and uninjured; we did not, however, explore them, as our recollections of Chinon were vivid, and we were somewhat fatigued with several days' incessant climbing.

The principal cave, correctly speaking, is two hundred feet long and about fifty feet wide, the vaults are built into the rock with hewn stone, and the cement is formed of a sort of sulphate of lime, not known in the country.

Whatever was the destination of these curious caves, and by whomsoever they were constructed, whether by the Romans or by Foulques Nera, who might have wished to provision a country which he had covered with fortresses, they are wonderful works of solidity and ingenuity, and worthy to excite admiration.

After being caught half-a-dozen times in a smart shower, which the succeeding bright gleams of the sun made us forget, we resolved, in order to *dry our feet*, to walk into the bed of the river, which, being filled with deep, hot sand, dries immediately. This we did, and roamed about

till our object was accomplished, admiring, from *under* the bridge, the majestic appearance of the old castle and the singular town: we then returned to the *top* of the fine, bold bridge, as the *majestic* Loire offered, on this side, a stream where women were washing, too deep for us to cross; and found that the best spot to see the town is from its centre. We then, having crossed it, went down a very slovenly, shabby street opposite, and crossed the wooden bridge over the Loire, beneath which is the broader current, to the Isle St. Jean, formed by the sands, and covered with sallows and poplars.

Here, in 504, the famous conference took place between Clovis and Alaric the Visigoth, to consecrate the remembrance of which, Clovis had coins struck, on which the interview was represented, with the word *Ambacia.*

Within a pleasant walk or drive from Amboise is the forest of Chanteloup, where stands a fine pagoda, the sole remnant of the Castle built by the Duke de Choiseul in the midst of the wood, which served as a park round the building. The château was not very ancient, and came to the duke in 1760. He was exiled to his estates by Louis XV, and to that circum-

stance the town of Amboise owes the principal part of its embellishments.

The pagoda is one hundred and twenty feet high, and five hundred and seventy feet above the level of the sea. It has seven stories, from each of which a fine view is obtained, but from the last the whole of the forest of Chanteloup, in all its extent, with an immense tract of country, is spread out for leagues, with rivers, and mountains, and cultivated plains seen, in this clear atmosphere, to a great distance. As it now belongs to the Duke of Orleans, who admires it extremely, he will probably keep it up as a hunting lodge. The whole of the château was destroyed at the great Revolution.

CHAPTER VIII.

Loches. — Roman Tower. — Beaulieu. — St. Ours.—Geoffroy Grise Gonelle.—The Tomb and the Monks. — Chapel of Louis XI. — English Visitors.—The Castle of Loches. — The Dungeons. — Oubliettes. — Observatory of Catherine. —Prison des Anglais.

ETTING out from Amboise early in the morning, we took, on our way to Loches, the city of Agnés Sorel. It was raining hard, but, occasionally, the sun shone out brilliantly, and illumined the country we passed through, which is, however, in general, flat, and rather monotonous, its only beauty being the vines, which are in profusion. Sometimes the whole scene changes, and a few hills, rather steep, appear; then, again, comes a wide champagne country, wild, and appearing uncultivated, though, in proper season, covered with corn for leagues. The

Romans are said to have had camps in this part, and its uninterrupted extent is most favourable to the accommodation of an army: there is, indeed, "ample space and room enough" for many legions.

Bléré is a strange, ugly, stony old town, very like some of the wildest in Bretagne. As soon as you enter the magnificent Forest of Loches a totally new aspect is presented: for several leagues rich glades open amongst the thick, high trees, avenues of young oaks spread into beautiful vistas, light, graceful foliage is succeeded by massive, antique branches, which look coeval with the kings of old time, who hunted the wolf and boar when they were saplings. It is truly a royal forest, the finest we had yet seen, and one of the grandest in France. The road appears interminable: it is excellent, broad, and well kept; on each side, around, behind, before, nothing but huge, towering trees! I imagined it might give some idea of an American forest; at all events, it is extremely grand.

Suddenly we emerged from this leafy skreen, and a fine smiling country greeted us: at a distance we thought we saw before us the town we were seeking, for a very imposing spire rose,

up from a mass of building, and for more than a league was continually in our view, higher and higher, plainer and plainer, and evidently belonging to a building of great consequence. We advanced steadily; it was before us; we wound round a steep hill, still it rose in front; we descended a declivity, and emerged upon a plain; again mounted and arrived, not at Loches, but at the insignificant village of St. Quentin, where this splendid spire crowns a fine old church, which, by the antique walls scattered along the way, must formerly have been attached to an important religious establishment.

We continued our route, but still Loches seemed hidden in the *future*. By degrees we became aware of an enormous square mass of building, which looked as if amongst the clouds, and we were not sure was not a *congeries* of clouds alone, so shadowy and wild it seemed: for three leagues this giant remained immovable, frowning and beckoning us on. "That," we were told, "is the great square Roman tower of Loches," and we watched the grim spectre with increased interest. For a few moments he was lost, as we slowly ascended a hill; on reaching the top

of which, a broad green meadow appeared at our feet, with streams, and groves, and bowers surrounding it, and springing from its bosom into the sky, the towers, and spires, and turrets of majestic Loches covered the opposite hill.

Of all the towns I had visited, the appearance of Loches by this approach, struck me as most imposing in its feudal grandeur: tower after tower; large, dark, and high, looked down upon the valley beneath, the huge Roman fortress, commanding them all, like a feudal sovereign dominating over his powerful barons who chafed beneath his rule and unwillingly confessed his superiority. But it was yet long before we reached this strange town, for first its rival Beaulieu, whose pretensions answer precisely to those of Chateauneuf, at Tours, was to be traversed with all its antique houses, and the skeletons, for little more remains, of its once celebrated churches and rich abbeys; literally, scarcely anything is left but shells of these far-famed structures, once the pride of the country, and the objects of veneration to a race of monarchs. The river Indre divides the town from Loches, and a jealousy which has existed from time immemorial, separates the interests of the

inhabitants of both places; all attempts to connect them in amity have failed, and they have still their respective fairs, markets, and municipal administration.

A French writer describes Loches as an antique relic *enfoncée dans son obscurité séculaire*, which modern amateurs of the middle ages should place under a glass case, or preserve in one of the galleries of the musée Charlès X, beside some Egyptian manuscript.

Without looking so far back as the Romans, whose square tower tells its own tale, before the town fell into the claws of the Dukes of Aquitaine, the old castle of Loches could boast of high antiquity;—and its church of Saint *Ours*, so savage in the sound of its appellation, carries with it recollections of eld, and conjures up a thousand mysterious thoughts; a species of fortified church, it recalls those times when it was necessary to pray with the sword drawn, as well as to "drink the red wine through the helmet barr'd."

The nave of St. Ours is formed of a succession of towers and domes vaulted in a pyramidal shape, each isolated, and capable of being converted into a donjon. The general character of

the building is Gothic, or rather Byzantine; in many parts of the walls can be traced fragments of Roman sculpture, and one very perfect remnant of that date is preserved in the *bénitier*, which had been conjectured, apparently with reason, to have been an ancient altar.

The remarkable towers which attract the attention immediately, are one hundred and twenty feet high, their construction is attributed, by popular tradition, to that Count of Anjou whose name's portentous severity seems to breathe of fairy horrors, Blue-beard and The Beast! no other than the warrior-chief who led his legions to the Holy Wars, the redoubtable Geoffroy Grise-Gonelle! His statue, and that of his no less grim and fearful son, Foulques-Nera, were to be seen in the church of St. Ours, till the savages of the Revolution broke those venerable figures to pieces which had excited the awe and respect of ages. One statue, however, almost miraculously escaped, and our vexation for the loss of the two grim champions, is forgotten in the joy of its preservation, for one more exquisitely lovely, or more peculiarly interesting, it is difficult to find.

This is the tomb of the perhaps too celebrated

Agnes Sorel, who, with Diane de Poictiers, divides France, at least this half of France; for scarcely a town exists which has not some memories to offer of these two celebrated favourites, powerful alike by their beauty and talents, and the entire sway which they exercised over their royal protectors.

In the highest tower of the castle, built expressly for the beautiful Agnes, and which bears her name, now reposes in a small chamber the famous tomb, finely restored, and bearing no marks whatever of the injury it must have sustained from time and ill-usage. But to continue the account of the church, where the tomb is no longer to be seen of her whose piety made her one of its chief benefactors; who endowed it, embellished and loaded it with honours, yet the canons of which, soon after her death, seized with religious remorse for having so long endured benefits from a character not altogether immaculate, and who could *offend* no more by her seductive gifts, applied to Louis XI, whom they hoped to propitiate by so doing, for leave to eject her ashes from their sacred fane. The reply of the wily monarch is characteristic. "Very well, since you object to keeping her

corpse, you have nothing to do but to give back at the same time all the goods, lands, money, and jewels that this body, when it had a soul, endowed you with." There was no fear, after this, of the consciences of the holy men being troubled, and Agnes was permitted to rest in peace, more fortunate than the Fair Rosamond, who met with similar gratitude from the monks of Woodstock, whose horror at frailty awoke always at a convenient distance from the period, when to remember it would have been dangerous to their interest.

The porch of the principal entrance to St. Ours is beautiful: the stone of so pure a colour, that it looks like marble; the capitals of the pillars are delicately carved, and seem of all periods, from Roman to middle age. Like St. Denis, at Amboise, the grotesque prevails in the ornaments, and figures quite as comic appear peeping from graceful or bold groups of foliage. Two owls, for instance, will be represented joined by the head which has a human expression, and gnashes the teeth, as if enjoying the meal it has made on the two bodies. But it would be endless to attempt to describe what is so amusing and absurd to trace.

A short time since, a subterranean chapel was discovered, while some repairs were going on in the church, and it proves, by the arms and devices on the walls, to have been built by Louis XI, who was accustomed to retire here to his devotions. The vaulted cell, for such it appears, is small and strongly built; the stone altar the same, and a little window admitting just sufficient light to show it. It is a gloomy retreat, just fit for the meditations of the sinner whose religious terrors led him there.

We were guided to this part of the church by a young man of considerable intelligence and great civility, who had been summoned to our aid, as he possessed the key of the chapel, by the waiting-maid at our inn, who had apparently taken a violent fancy to us, and insisted on running, unbonneted through the wet streets, and climbing the precipitous hill where the church and castle stand, fearing we might not find our way at once. This good-humoured, handsome, wild-looking specimen of the female population of Loches, told us, all the world there were devoted to the English, who were "des braves gens," and so fond of sights! She related to

us with much animation, the fact that, only a week before, an English gentleman, Mr. Walsh, from Tours, accompanied by *eleven* male friends, had arrived at their hotel, and spent the day in exploring the antiquities of Loches, and as they spent their money liberally, and all seemed in high good-humour, they gave the most unbounded satisfaction, as well as created an immense sensation in this secluded and little visited place.

Our new guide introduced us to the château, and enjoyed with us the views from the towers, and all the wonders that the walls enclose; he seemed an enthusiastic amateur, and extremely proud of his native town, all the beauties and advantages of which he pointed out with great eagerness. He professed his admiration of our countrywomen in general, and dwelt with a sort of wonder upon their transparent fairness, for which he considered them famous, regretting and *apologising* for the complexions of the French who live, he said, so much in the air that they are as " black *as Moors.*"

The castle of Loches is said to be the best preserved of all the château-forts of Touraine, but it is nevertheless very much in ruins. It

is built on a rock of great elevation, and quite perpendicular on three sides: this rock had been isolated, in order to render the castle impregnable, by a broad and deep excavation from the contiguous mountain of Vignemont.

Besides, the enormous square tower attributed to the Romans, there is one of stupendous size, built by Louis XI, and much of the more modern part was constructed by Louis XII, now occupied as a tribunal and *sous-préfecture.*

The château has been the theatre of many historical events; amongst others, James V. of

Scotland came here to espouse Magdalen of France, and made his *entrée* into Loches about the year 1534. Here Francis I, with his queen, and a numerous and brilliant court, received the Emperor Charles V, whom he conducted from hence to Paris.* Hither the Duc d'Epernon, when disgraced by Henri III, retired, and here he lived in the utmost pomp and splendour till his death in 1642. The last French sovereign who made it his abode was Henri II.

The most beautiful part of the castle, indeed the only portion which exhibits any fine architecture, is the elegant little oratory of Anne of Brittany. It stands in a tower, on the third story, and commands a view more extensive and magnificent than can be described. The ermines and *cordelières* of the illustrious heiress cover the walls; the roof is exquisitely carved, the pendants and *rosaces* inimitable—the altar covered with her devices, and its twisted and ornamented pillars adorned with foliage and flowers in the purest taste. Altogether, the oratory is

* Loches was at that time the grand route from Paris to Spain; the discontinuance of this road reduced the town to comparative insignificance, and its river being but little adapted to navigable purposes, contributed to its decadence.

a perfect gem, and the adjoining bedroom, with its niches, charming: that is, for its form, and the splendid view it commands; for bare walls alone remain throughout the castle.

We entered the great square, ruined, Roman tower, open to the sky, and presenting a series of loop-holes from height to height, indicating the different stories which formerly existed, and plainly showing that high as it still is, time has destroyed several. The court is now overgrown with high grass and weeds, and it is unused. We then proceeded to visit the dungeons, which are renowned for their frightful number and strength. It would be difficult to convey an idea of the profound horror which the sight of these receptacles of human misery, these relics of ancient barbarity, display! We groped amongst piles of rubbish, mounting and descending alternately for a long time; now startled by coming suddenly upon a hideous chasm, and gazing down into the "dark profound," from which we naturally expected to see "two huge black arms" appear, and being told that this was one of the many *oubliettes* of which we stood so much in awe,—now led into a narrow cell with grated windows, the prison and probably the grave of

many a devoted wretch; and from depth to depth we descended, till the horrible den was gained where the unfortunate Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, was confined. This damp, dark, frightful vault still bears traces of the attempts of the wretched captive to beguile his tedious hours. On each side of the narrow window, which admitted light through a distant opening in the wall, fifteen feet thick, armed with strong iron bars at three different distances before that light could enter! are to be seen with difficulty amongst the green damps which have marked the walls and roof, rude figures of warlike heads, casques, swords, and shields, dimly visible like shades flitting amidst the gloom.

We looked round in horror and saw other black niches extending into the darkness. We were shown the prisons of Jean II, Duc d'Alençon; of Pierre de Brezé, Grand Sénéschal; of Saint Vallier, father of the celebrated Diane de Poictiers; and "last and ugliest," the *cachot* de Balue, in which that miserable man lingered out his existence in an iron cage; where also the tender mercies of a sovereign consigned the historian Philippe de Comines, who for nearly eight months (Balue had passed *years!*) groaned

in this frightful confinement. Could it be, as reported, that the gentle Duchess Anne placed him there?

Fatigued, and absolutely terrified, we entreated to be released, and were glad enough to leave unseen several lower dungeons, which must have descended into the bowels of the earth, for we seemed already to have reached some "lower than the lowest."

All the prisons above these, which have the advantage of light and a certain degree of air, are still used as places of detention for small offences, principally political. We entered several of these, where the poor prisoners asked for sous "*pour acheter du tabac*," and seemed ill enough accommodated, though, with the evidences of former punishment round them, they might have looked upon their own state as paradise. In one of these rooms we observed an immensely thick and strong iron bar fastened to two short pillars; to this were affixed huge iron rings, apparently for the purpose of securing prisoners: by a gigantic rusted iron chain, in the wall of another, hung a frighful collar, the use of which imagination shuddered to contemplate!

Our joy was great when, after mounting steps

innumerable, we found ourselves at length on the platform of the prison tower, looking round in the open air on an extensive panorama of the most animated and brilliant country, illumined by fitful gleams of sunshine, and exhibiting a variety, quite inexhaustible, of plain, and mountain, and forest. The strange old town, its crowded towers and pinnacles, the great square Roman fortress, the pyramids of Saint Ours, all laid out before the near view, and the distant country spreading away into space for leagues, gave the scene features quite unique; nor was the romance destroyed when we were told that we rested on a block of stone which once served as an observatory to the superstitious Catherine de Medici, when she followed her occult studies directed by some famous astrologer, to whom she accorded all her faith.

On descending from this tower we found we had yet to visit another prison called "des Anglois," probably used during the occupation of Loches by our Henry II. and John. It is, however, a less fearful place, and I am rather inclined to believe might have been used as a cellar, as it is very dry and warm; or it might have been a subterranean chapel, for the vault is built with

some elegance. This chamber, to which a long flight of stairs leads from a door which till lately was walled up, has not been very long discovered; and the learned discussions which took place between our young antiquarian guide and the burly gaoler who had conducted us through his department, threatened to keep us longer than we desired in this mysterious retreat. At last, their dispute finished, we were allowed to ascend, and felt almost relieved when we had quitted this part of the terrible castle, and entered the ground-floor vaulted cell, adorned with modern painted glass, representing the device of Agnés, and her portrait with that of her royal lover, where reposes the tomb of *la dame*, properly called, though not correctly, *de Beauté*.

CHAPTER IX.

Loches —Agnés Sorel.— Monogram. — Bonaventure. — François the First's Letter.—Olivier le Diable.—Monument of St. Nicolas.—Orfon.

. . . la dame belle et plaisans
En tous biens estoit si parfaite
Que Diex pour amer l'avait faite.

CHATELAIN DE COUCY.

THE tomb of Agnés Sorel is of black and white marble, inscribed on all sides with the titles and virtues of the fair creature to whom it was raised. The figure is of the natural size, full length, reclining with the pretty slight hands on the bosom: the proportions are all fine, and the face is very pretty, though the predominant expression is that of sense and firmness: there is not, however,

the slightest hardness or unfeminine character, on the contrary, the features are small and delicately formed: the long hair is confined by a coronet of pearls, and a neckless of pearls clasps the throat. In looking on this statue one can quite imagine the kind of being *la gentille Agnés* must have been: but there is a quiet and refinement about the face that tells no tale of frailty—it might rather have belonged to the virtuous wife than to the mistress of a king, and perhaps accounts for the decency which her lover attempted always to keep up in his intercourse with her; constructing subterraneous

ways by which to visit her, instead of openly keeping her in his palaces before the eyes of his court. Although their intercourse was sufficiently known, they "assumed a virtue," and perhaps for that, even deserve some credit. Her aspect is noble and dignified, and bespeaks her birth, and, in the chief traits of her life, her character.

Agnés was born in 1409, in the village of Fromenteau. Her father, Jean Sorel, was Lord of Saint Gerard and Fromenteau, and her mother, Châtelaine of Verneuil, in the Bourbonnois; both her parents died in her infancy, and she was brought up by an aunt, la Dame de Maignelais, her mother's sister, who placed her as maid of honour about the queen, wife of Charles VII. She was then eighteen, and combined a noble and enlightened mind with surpassing beauty and seductive grace. The passion conceived for her by the young king was never extinguished but with her existence, and her conduct appears such as to have even secured the esteem of her rival, the queen. Alain Chartier thus names her: "*Si aucune chose elle avait commise avec le roi*, cela avait été fait très cautelousement," which implies a rather singular doubt,

which, it is to be feared, cannot well be supported.

The poor, the clergy, and, above all, the nation found a friend in Agnés, and whatever there was of good in the mind of Charles, her power could bring into action, and the profuse expenditure which he delighted to lavish on her, perhaps was well bestowed by the former *Roi de Bourges*, of whom she made the powerful monarch of a victorious kingdom.

Agnés possessed in this province the Château de la Guerche, which was built for her; in Berry, those of Bois, Trouseau, and Issoudren; in Normandy, Vernon-sur-Seine, and Beauté, or, rather *Breauté*-sur-Marne, near Vincennes.

La Belles des Belles, at the age of forty, was still the most lovely woman in France, adored by the king, respected and beloved by the people, when death suddenly carried off "the most replenished sweet work of nature," whether by natural disease or by poison was never ascertained. She died at the Château de Menil, near Jumièges, when on her way to join Charles in Normandy. According to her desire her body was taken to Loches, where it was placed in a black marble tomb in the choir of the collegiate church.

Louis XVI, in consequence of the reiterated requests of the canons of Loches, authorized the translation of the tomb of Agnés to the nave of the church, with the special clause that no part of the body was to be disturbed; for it was imagined, not without reason, that respect for the dead would not be strong enough to repress the natural desire to appropriate some of these precious remains.

The first exhumation of the body of the fair Agnés took place on the 5th March 1777. After opening the tomb, a sort of vaulted cell was discovered beneath the marble of the sarcophagus, in which reposed a coffin of oak enclosing another of lead, which was partly decayed; this covered a third of cedar-wood, in which lay the object of so much care; the head was entire, but all but the bones had disappeared: the teeth, which were very fine, were all uninjured, and the hair was there in all its beauty; two long floating ringlets depended at each side of what had been the face, and the long tresses behind were from eighteen to twenty inches long: the colour was of a clear brown.

The surgeon who assisted at the opening of the tomb, it appears, could not resist his desire to

become the possessor of one of these beautiful tresses; but, as soon as the theft was discovered, means were taken immediately to recover the lost treasure, which was in due time restored to the rector of St. Ours, who delivered it to the Archbishop of Tours, who, lamentable to relate, cast it into the fire as a profane relic unworthy of regard!

It seemed as if this unnecessary profanation of the remains of her who had been looked upon almost as the tutelary genius of France, was an omen of the fearful events which so soon followed; the priests who, after three hundred years, suddenly discovered that her tomb was in the way, little dreamt at that moment of their own annihilation. Agnés Sorel rose from her tomb, like a Pythoness disturbed in her cave, to announce the desolation which was about to fall on her country.

At the fatal period of the Revolution, this tomb was, with infinite difficulty, preserved in the general wreck, and some funds appropriated to obtain for it a niche of safety in a part of the old château; and in 1834 it was placed where it is now found, by the sous-préfet of the arrondissement, in compliance with the wish of

several lovers of the arts. Here, then, after many vicissitudes, lies, *without the pale of the church*, the lovely *mistress of France*, for so she may be called, being as much loved by the nation as by the king. "She sleeps well," with her two white lambs at her feet, and two watching angels at her head, and is perhaps as beautiful a vision as ever delighted the eyes of a lover of the romantic in history.

The punning device which was used by Charles to designate Agnés, was the tree *surelle*, (the sallow); and in the château which he built for her at La Guerche, the walls were covered with this tree, with L. and A. interlaced, forming *à sur elle*, a curious monogram of her name. Besides, at this her favourite residence, every luxury of architecture was expended to adorn the château where the lovers were accustomed to meet. The powers of painting, to represent the king's prowess in the chase, and his lovely favourite in various attitudes, were taxed to the utmost; but of all this scarcely a vestige remains: the immense thickness of the walls of the castle has kept it still standing, and a statue, supposed to be original, of the lady of the manor, is now placed in a turret chapel, adorned with painted

glass; a pretty park, called *à l'Anglaise*, bathed by the waters of the Creuse, surrounds the former habitation of Agnés.

At Huismes, near Chinon, Charles VII. built another bower for his beloved, which he called Bonaventure, in memory of the sylvan scene where, beneath an oak, on that spot, he first received from her the confession of her attachment.

At Beaulieu, which the Indre divides from Loches, she had a house, which seems to indicate her not having altogether resided in the castle with her lover.

The famous lines, said to be written by François I. on the Gentille Agnès, are not, after all, perfectly authenticated: Voltaire doubts his being their author, and cites, as a proof, that *le Roi Chevalier's* diction was not so pure as it would appear by those verses. To support his assertion he cites a letter, given by Daniel, in proof that François used the *dialecte Tourangeau*, then commonly spoken at court. This is the beginning of the curious letter which is to destroy, by its evidence, his authorship of those pleasing and complimentary lines which do so much honour to the saviour of her country.

"Tout à steure, ynsi que je me voloys mestre o let, est arrivé Saral, lequel m'a apporté la certeneté du levement d'in siége," &c.

As we left this most curious and interesting town, we looked back many times before we passed the fine antique gateway, whose embattled walls still give a warlike aspect to the now peaceful place. Formerly it was fortified most extensively, and surrounded by a deep moat, into which the waters of the Indre could at will be introduced.

There were five gates; one was called La Porte Poitevine, because it opened to the road to Poitou, though the frequent journeys made by Charles VII. to La Guerche caused it at that time to be more generally called Porte de la Guerche. Another was La Porte Picoys leading to the faubourg of that name, where the present Hôtel de Ville stands. That of St. Antoine is near the church dedicated to that saint, the tower of which dates from the time of François I, and probably served as a belfry. The Portail des Cordeliers was near the convent of that name. The Porte des Cerfs, between Loches and Beaulieu, was so called because it led to the forest.

We quitted its vine-covered hills and its emerald green meadows and plunged once more into the vast forest, which no doubt in the days when Henry II. of England and his sons hunted in these parts extended over a much greater space of country, and advanced much nearer to the walls of the town, which was given as dower to the widow of Cœur de Lion, and of which Olivier le Diable was governor!

There has always reigned in this enormous forest, where the wild boar still maintains his haunts, and whence the wolf is not entirely extirpated, a gloomy mystery which has its charm; and as in the dusk of evening we passed through it on our return, our imaginations conjured up a variety of strange fancies; among others the traditions of Orfon l'Enchanteur were not forgotten, and we tried to persuade ourselves that we could hear the clink of his money above the rattling of our vehicle as we hurried along.

In the midst of this antique forest rises the yet-unaccounted-for monument of St. Nicolas, attributed to the Gauls, the Romans, or the fairies. It is composed of a circular mound surrounded on all sides by a deep moat. On the southern side is a way which conducts to a plat-

form on the summit: on the west is a kind of well, formerly much deeper than at present, for it is much choked up by ruins and earth: it does not appear to have been dug with the intention of procuring water: its masonry is very remarkable. On the northwest of this mound is a cavern, the opening of which is six feet wide and ten feet long; on following this, by precipitately descending, you arrive at a low doorway, by which another cavern is entered, leading to a third, and to how many more is lost in the uncertainty of conjecture; but this series of subterranean vaults probably conducted to a monastery which formerly existed here, and where the enchanter Orfon was known to keep his revels; for here he dwelt in his concealed palace beneath the earth, where he hoarded his immense treasures, for he was the heir to that mysterious knowledge left by the Druids, by means of which he could convert other metals into gold. Mountains of the precious metal grew under his hand, and, with daring impiety, the night he chose to count his riches was always that of the eve of Christmas. Every year on this awful night the inhabitants of this part of the country were alarmed by frightful storms. The furious wind howled wildly through

the immense forest of Loches, the gigantic trees bowed to the very earth, and a horrible commotion took place for leagues round, during all which time the Enchanter might be heard in the intervals of the tempest counting his gold, and dashing piece after piece upon his enormous heap with a ringing sound which made the vaults of the convent beneath which he dwelt echo and resound, while the timid monks, at the very moment when they were singing their hymns of thanksgiving, would be startled to hear the clanging sound of the hidden treasure.

Orfon was the scourge and terror of the neighbourhood; he inspired evil actions, he excited to wicked deeds, and though secretly cursed by all, none dared openly attack or reproach so powerful a monarch, the possessor of such heaps of gold. At length the period of his reign drew to a close, and one night in December, when the ground was covered with snow and the earth bound in the fetters of frost, in the midst of the Christmas mass of midnight, on a sudden, instead of the usual sound of the clink of gold, a frightful cry was heard, the tapers on the altar of St. Nicolas were extinguished, long and deep was the echo which died through the subterranean vaults,

and it was known to the monks and to the world that the enchanter Orfon had expired.

Even since that time he may yet be heard on Christmas night counting the gold which he may now no longer use, and uttering deep groans and lamentations over his useless treasure; but it requires a peculiar delicacy of hearing to distinguish the clink of his pieces as they are thrown upon the heap which accumulates no more.

CHAPTER X.

Blois.—Chaumont.—Les Tonneliers.—Arrival.—Inns.—The Conducteur.—The Château.—The arbitrary guide.—Exterior of the Château.—Le *Lion*.—Streets.—The Jesuits.—St. Nicolas.—Aqueduct.—Adventure of the Aqueduct.

THERE is no remarkable beauty in the river from Amboise to Blois, for the interminable rows of poplars weary the eye, and give a great formality to the scene. We were much struck, however, with the situation and appearance of a fine castle, of majestic style, which, in some of its features, reminded us of Chenonceau. We found it to be Chaumont, which Catherine exchanged with Diana for the former, after the death of Henri II, and so beautiful is its position, and so lordly its towers, that it probably, at the time, could be but little inferior: at

present it is the property of a family who live there, and I am told there are no relics of the time of Diana but its walls. The castle stands on a rising ground, with the village at its foot, and the Loire flowing beneath.

Here Catherine de' Medici occupied herself in those astrological studies in which she was an adept: whether her rival ever resided here after the exchange of castles, which she was obliged to make with as good a grace as possible, does not quite appear, for after her royal lover's death she retired to Anet, on the Eure, where she died. Chaumont was possessed, from the thirteenth century, by the family of Amboise. It is recorded that one of these lords suffered torture, by order of Thibaut V, in order that he might give up his right to the castle and domain. It passed about 1525, to the La Rochefoucaulds, and from them to Queen Catherine. There exists, on a window-frame, a sculptured shield, surmounted by a cardinal's hat, and a pendant *cordelière*, the arms of the Cardinal d'Amboise.

Before we reached Chousy, the diligence, pausing, was overtaken by a party of young *tonneliers*, each bearing the implements of his trade, and dressed in a variety of costume: all were ex-

tremely young, and full of gaiety: they seemed old friends of the *conducteur*, for much shaking of hands ensued on their meeting. Songs and jokes abounded amongst them, and after a little colloquy, they, to the number of *nine*, contrived to establish themselves on the top of the vehicle, (*where* we could scarcely imagine,) and so went on laughing, singing, and talking, till we reached Blois. We felt glad that they had obtained a place and were spared a long walk, but our philanthropy was considerably repressed when we discovered that their resting-places had principally been found amongst our baggage, some of the lighter part of which had not a little suffered by the constant kicking and dancing of their feet, as, in the exuberance of their animal spirits, they kept up an incessant tattoo amongst the boxes.

Here the *coteaux* are again covered with vines down to the very road; and so irregular is the ground, that some of the roofs of the houses do not reach above the path, and a rich woody valley falls suddenly beneath the level to rise again as unexpectedly.

On approaching Blois, the first object that attracts the eye is a remarkable obelisk on the

bridge, which one cannot at first understand, as it has the appearance of the spire of a church. The river is here fuller and finer than we had hitherto seen it, and the handsome quay along which we drove, the numerous spires of the opposite faubourg, and the general appearance of the town, were pleasing and lively. Our diligence, however, stopped at an inn, the mere outward appearance of which actually terrified us; and when, in spite of all remonstrance, our baggage was forcibly seized, and ourselves conducted into a black, dirty kitchen, filled with men, we looked round appalled: we were desired, by a very civil hostess, to walk up stairs, where we were assured we should be content; and, in a state of vexed amaze, we followed her up a turret stair. Every step grew blacker and more filthy: we had been induced to enter, imagining that this might be the side entrance to a magnificent house next door, which we fondly hoped was *the* hotel; but we now became aware of our mistake. To enter a squalid, dirty, *fine* bedroom, and as quickly rush out again, make the best of our way down the murderous-looking staircase, carrying as many of our things as we could, and clamouring for the treacherous *con-*

ducteur, was the only plan we could pursue. We crossed a sort of drawbridge over a cellar, and fancied we had escaped the fate of Amy Robsart, when we found oursèlves once more in the street, and after a great struggle with porters, hostess, and passengers in the same position as ourselves, all anxious about their baggage, at last the penitent *conducteur* came to our rescue, and, bidding us be quite easy, marched off with us and his load to one of the handsomest hotels in Blois. When fairly entered into a beautiful chamber with all the requisite accommodations, I could not refrain from reproaching our friend with attempting to serve his acquaintance at the expense of English travellers: he bore my indignation with great calmness, and replied to it by approaching the casement, throwing it wide open, and pointing triumphantly to the fine bridge, the magnificent river flowing at our feet, the beautiful buildings opposite, all lighted by a rich sun, when he turned round and exclaimed "Est-ce que je ne vous ai pas indiqué un bon hôtel—bon Dieu!"

There was nothing to be said to such an appeal—all the past was to be merged in the present, and in consideration of the fact, and

his extreme good-humour, we forgave him and the mischief his *nine* friends had done to our packages.

The Loire appeared to us much finer here than we had yet seen it; it is narrower and less divided by islands, consequently the stream is fuller. The moon was at the full when we arrived, and the late rains had swelled the tide, therefore it had some advantages which at Tours were wanting; but, under any circumstances, the two towns cannot be compared: it is true the waves are not here so lucid as at Tours, where they trickle along like diamond-drops, but the broad sheet of sparkling waters, glowing in the sun, or silvered by such a moon as delighted us at Blois, is really magnificent.

Blois is built on several hills, on one of which the castle stands; that castle, so famous in history for so many ages! from the Romans, whose walls still rise to mock the power of later builders—and Stephen (to whom many of the recollections belong) to Louis XII, the father of his people, who was born here; to François I, and the hideous murderous race of Medici. Here the frightful tragedy of the assassination of the Guises took place; every passage

and room is full of horror, where those wretches, without remorse or humanity, triumphed; and one scarcely can regret that every trace of them is swept away, the walls white-washed, the floors planed, their bloody marks effaced for ever, and the whole occupied as a caserne.

We met our friend the artist of St. Hubert's chapel, at Amboise, with his mother, an agreeable Frenchwoman, while we were going over the castle with our facetious guide, the porter, whose business it is to enlighten travellers, and who, though the most good-natured, is one of the most arbitrary of characters. Our acquaintances joined us, and were not sorry for the opportunity of seeing the rooms a second time, as they confessed to us that our guide had thoroughly bewildered them with his information. With his large bunch of keys and his portly figure, he made a most imposing appearance as he "marshalled us the way we should go:" but in vain did we ask questions relative to any object that excited our interest if it came out of the order he had laid down; everything, he informed us, was well known to him, for he had studied history in order to make himself master of all particulars relative to the castle; "but how,"

said he, "can you expect to hear what will be useful to you, if you can't wait, but will keep importuning me with questions at the wrong moment? I shall tell you all in turn, without missing the least thing—but do not allow your impatience to disturb our tranquillity." In this philosophical manner he prosed on from chamber to chamber, till we were almost exhausted with listening: he would interlard his discourse with scraps of English, such as "Nivere meend," and "Teake keer," rubbing his hands and chuckling as he uttered these words, which he asserted were the favourite expressions of our country-women, when they came to see the castle.

Except the mere circumstance of such and such events having happened in such chambers, the interior of the castle possesses no interest; as all is changed, and the walls and ceilings white-washed, and most of the carving removed or destroyed. The suite in which the tragedy of Guise's murder was perpetrated, is pointed out, and the closet into which the victim was dragged when the hateful Henri came to measure his dreaded enemy with his eye as he lay prostrate. The oratory and rooms occupied by his wicked mother, the arch-witch, Catherine,

the Salle des Etats, and countless others are all dismantled.

It is the exterior of the château which deserves admiration, and the beautiful open spiral staircase, unrivalled except at Chambord. The façade, built by Louis XII, is very interesting; mutilated remains of the statues of Louis and the heiress of Bretagne, are in niches over the grand entrance, and beautiful ogee windows still exist. A gallery and tower, built by Stephen, are in the interior court; another façade is by Francis I, whose Salamander and the double DD's of Henri II, occur continually. The extent of the castle is enormous, and the bewildering variety of architecture gives it the effect of a *city* built in different ages. Here are huge towers and embattled walls, erected by the earliest Counts of Blois, joining to the elegant ornamented style of the Medici, or the elaborate grace of the time of François; further on appear specimens of the bad taste of Louis XIII. and XIV, and the incongruous designs of Mansard, which ill accord with the style of the middle ages, conspicuous in other parts. All this, together, forms a most extraordinary pile of building, which, taken in parts, is admirable. A ruined Roman

tower, and bridges and walls, extend their lines on the opposite side of a large space, once an exterior court, forming picturesque *bits*, which were not lost on our young artist: there is, indeed, in Blois endless food for an artist's study, and it would be difficult to choose amiss among the sketches it offers at every turn.

The Cathedral of Blois stands on another hill, at a distance from the castle, and offers nothing to interest. It is built after the designs of Mansard, is heavy, and without grace: over the altar is rather a fine piece of painted glass, representing the crucifixion, as large as life; but nothing is in conformity with it, and it fails of its effect. The Evêché is a handsome building, and its gardens and walks, open to the public, charming. On terraces, along the ancient walls, they overlook the town and magnificent river, with a far distant prospect, in which can easily be distinguished Chambord, with its oriental turrets, on one hand, and the gothic towers of Chaumont on the other. These promenades are most agreeable, and laid out with taste: beneath are the private gardens of the archbishop, on a lower terrace, full of flowers and fruit, looking tempting and lively.

The honours of this part of Blois were done us by a stranger, who was similarly seeking the picturesque in travel: his appearance was to us *then* so remarkable, that we started on his accosting us to point out some object worthy our attention. He was a man about five-and-twenty, attired in a kind of furred *palletot*, buckled round his waist: his long tresses were confined by an eastern-looking casquette, his chestnut beard, whiskers, and moustachios, combining together in a downward sweep, reached to his breast, which the beard, branching off square, nearly covered; his dark eyes flashed from amongst this forest of hair like the orbs of a "wull-cat," and his appearance was most astounding to our inexperience, for we had then to learn that this is the approved style of the Parisian exquisites of the present day, who are known by the sobriquet of "Lions."* Fierce and ultra-African as this figure seemed, it spoke in so soft and gentle a tone, that all fear was at once removed, and the refinement of its manners

* The "*femelles de ces mâles*," we learned, are called "*Gazelles*:" they vie with their partners in extravagance of costume.

pleasingly contradicted the menacing character of its countenance.

From the fine broad quays, adorned with very handsome shaded promenades, the trees of which are luxuriant, but their appearance spoilt by having large advertising sheets stuck all over their trunks (!)—to the heights, the streets are extremely steep and are paved in steps as at Angers, but they are in general wider and better: they are much less crowded and dark than the great antiquity of the town might lead one to expect: however, in the Quartier des Juifs, they preserve their original appearance, being crooked, dark, high, and narrow, and excluding daylight. A great many retain their antique names, as Rue Pierre de Blois, Rue des Papegaux, Rue des chants d'Oiseaux, &c. We met with several very curiously carved houses; one in particular, at the end of the precipitous street of Pierre de Blois, leading to the Place de l'Evêché, in the style of those at Angers of the fourteenth century. An immense deal, however, has been cleared away, and though the town has gained air and light by their demolition, the taste displayed in the new buildings is not remarkable.

The church of the Jesuits is handsome, and is undergoing judicious restoration. There are two altars of carved white marble, whose beauty, though considerably defaced, makes one regret the injuries they have sustained, not from time, but the less sparing hand of man: in several of the chapels are wreaths of flowers in stone above the altars, so exquisitely carved as to excite astonishment by their truth and grace, and these are perfectly entire.

The old church at Vienne, the faubourg on the other side of the bridge, which is very extensive, is in the heaviest early style of architecture; and though imposing exteriorly, has but little to interest within, except for the solemn gloom which its huge pillars and low-groined roofs cast round, giving it the effect of a subterranean chapel. It possesses a few painted windows, the figures much mutilated and oddly pierced, their rich colours spreading a dim religious light on the old and rugged pavement.

But the treasure of Blois in this style is the beautiful church of St. Nicolas, than which I never saw one lighter or more graceful: its antiquity is very great, and it is built in the best taste of the period. A cupola surrounded with

delicate arches, supported by slender columns, gives height and elegance to the roof: this form reminded us of the temple-shaped church of Fontevraud. Clustered groups of small pillars spring up, like reeds "of decent growth" fit for the Cyclop's instrument, suited to his "capacious mouth," to the height of the roof, and support numerous arches of extensive span. The chapels are beautiful, and the capitals of some of the shorter pillars are grotesque and curious: there are no tombs, but several marble slabs elaborately carved are affixed to the walls, so cruelly defaced, however, that the joint efforts of ourselves and our artist friends failed to discover their subject.

There are several good squares in Blois; in one is the Salle de Spectacle, which we sought after for some time, not imagining that a fine Gothic church could have been converted into a theatre; but so it is. Opposite this remarkable building is all that remains of an exquisite little Gothic fountain, which is being cleared away, having become too ruinous to be available. The ornaments of this are most graceful and elegant, and we saw with regret what its fate must inevitably be: our artist friend made a charming

drawing of it, which will be very valuable as a reminiscence, for doubtless it is already destroyed, to be replaced by a new fountain, which was greatly required.

We had heard that there existed the remains of a magnificent Roman aqueduct, and we sought for it for some time, blaming ourselves for not at once discovering what was of course so conspicuous. We inquired at several libraries, but found every one in amaze at our questions, as no French person likes to confess himself in ignorance, particularly on a subject connected with his town. We were directed different ways, but still no aqueduct appeared: at last, after wandering through innumerable streets, we reached a very shabby faubourg, where we were told to ask for the Pont de César; but, like the estates of the Lord Marquis of Carrabas, it was nowhere to be found. To the great amusement of a group of very cheerful old women, who seemed to think us crazed, "*à la mode Anglaise*," we continued our demands, and had nearly given up our search in despair, when we beheld a smart intelligent-looking *cordonnier*, carrying home some shoes, advancing in our direction. As cobblers and barbers are sure to know all that is to be known,

we accosted him, and learnt that we were actually standing on the Pont de César at that moment, and the famous aqueduct was within a few yards of us, being nothing more than a common sewer; admirably constructed, certainly, being a series of arched vaults, which extend in every direction under the town, and communicate with the river. Our informant entered very learnedly into the praise of Roman ability, and pointed out to us the antique walls which might be traced by the side of the ditch near where we stood, the arches of the little bridge overgrown with weeds and covered with rubbish, and the dark opening down which, he said, an antiquary, resolved to discover the extent of the sewer, had ventured and remained exploring for hours; an occupation, I should conceive, more curious than agreeable, and requiring a zeal *à toute épreuve* to undertake! Thus ended our adventure of the aqueducts, which, like the search after the philosopher's stone, led to many interesting discoveries, as we by this means made ourselves acquainted with several sites and points which we should otherwise have missed.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAMBORD.— Ménard le Château. — Bibliothèque of Blois. —Crême de St. Gervais.—Moonlight.—Lingering departure.—Meun.—Notre Dame de Cléry.—Tomb of Louis II. —Merlin Hume.—St. Ay.

A BELLE LOIRE for once looked full and sparkling, the sun shone brilliantly, "and all the clouds that lower'd" for so many days, had disappeared, leaving the atmosphere as clear as possible; a fine fresh air added to the charm of the inviting morning when we set out, having made a party with our artist friends to Chambord, four leagues from Blois, and the great lion of that part of the country.

The drive is extremely pleasant, and almost for the first time we found ourselves in a respectable carriage, really good and well appointed, with a coachman looking like a man of this

world, and *not* in a blouse. Indeed Blois and all its belongings is more civilized than any town we had seen, not excepting Tours. We should have said the improvement was owing to a nearer approach to the capital, but for the falling off we discovered at Orleans, which is nearer.

Blois was formerly looked upon as the court town, *par excellence;* its language, manners, and habits, partook of the refinement attendant on the court, whose residence was fixed there. The inhabitants were said to speak the best French in France, and an air of grace was supposed to pervade all things within its limits. As for the language, it is now, as far as we could judge, no better than any other *patois* on the Loire; but it would seem that it has retained a superiority in many respects, and a style *de maitre* as though it could not forget the time when it was preferred to Paris by the gay followers of the Roi Chevalier. The elegance for which it was famed may have faded away, but the politeness and ease, and a certain polish belonging to a better order of society, may be traced in most of the habits and customs of Blois.

To return to our drive, in our smart carriage,

of which we were "justly vain." The first object of interest, *en route*, is Ménard le Château, formerly the residence of Madame de Pompadour, now belonging to the Prince de Chimay, who has established there an *école d'arts et métiers*. The building is very extensive, the gardens must be fine, and the terraces are magnificent, and command an immense view of the banks of the Loire: avenues of handsome, though formally-cut trees, extend along the shore for a long distance, elevated above the river, with neat, well-kept walks between, and both house and grounds appearing in excellent repair; but there is nothing beyond its extent and commodiousness to admire, nor does the recollection of Madame de Pompadour excite any particularly pleasurable memoirs in the traveller's mind as he passes by.

A somewhat rugged, and now neglected road leads to the celebrated château of Francis I, which had been his pet place, where he delighted to let his imagination run riot, and which he formed to resemble, in some degree, a Moorish palace. Chambord was his *Pavilion*, and its minarets and domes must have appeared as strange, and were, perhaps, as much criticised in France,

in his time, as the Brighton *bijou* of George IV. But Francis had a less questionable taste, and the enormous sums he expended in adorning this palace, were not so utterly thrown away, for the château must have been a gorgeous fabric at the time when he delighted in its beauty.* The vandalism of Louis XIV. and his successor here shines forth in full vigour. Surrounding the château on three sides, a hideous range of low buildings, in the very worst taste, have been placed: these are out-houses, stables, servants' apartments, &c., and shut out the beauty of the interior courts, most effectually concealing the elegant façades, and all the proportions of the

* Chambord was commenced in 1526. Although François I. employed always *eighteen hundred* workmen upon it, and Henri II, Henri III, and Charles IX, continued the construction, it was never completely finished. Louis XIII. was particularly fond of it as a residence, and under Louis XIV. it became another Versailles, from the fêtes which were here given. Some of the comedies of Molière, as, for instance, "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," were played in this palace for the first time in 1670.

King Stanislaus afterwards occupied Chambord, where he lived in the style of a country gentleman: the Maréchal de Saxe kept up great splendour within its walls, and died here. The family of Polignac made it a place of quiet enjoyment, and the last occupant, Berthier, lived here wretchedly, cutting down the woods, and neglecting the domain.

palace worthy of admiration, within their circumvallation. At each angle of the castle an enormous roof of the favourite extinguisher shape, rises from amidst the delicate spires and turrets which spring up round them, like flowering reeds beside some deformed trunk! Never was ingenuity taxed to such an extent to render what was originally beautifully singular, grotesque and monstrous. A deep feeling of disgust and disappointment immediately takes possession of the beholder's mind, and a vain desire to separate the work of the two monarchs, so opposite in all ways, and so unnaturally brought into competition.

One can only rejoice that the war waged by the soi-disant lover of Grecian architecture against the grace and elegance of that which Francis imitated from the Italian and Spanish, combined with the taste of the middle ages, not unsuccessfully striving to produce a pleasing result, has permitted anything but his own heavy clumsy piles to appear; and be grateful to hail the too-often repeated salamander, and the crowned crescent on the walls and roofs. The unrivalled double staircase, a master-piece of elegance and beauty, is still perfect, at least, as

regards its exterior; but the effect is a good deal lessened by a flooring having been constructed half way up inside, in order that more chambers might be procured. The ceilings of that part built by Francis are elaborately decorated in panels of alternate F's crowned, and the salamander in the midst of flames. On some of the walls, Henri II. has left his devices and those of his huntress love; but the windows on which the *Roi Chevalier*, in a pettish mood, traced those ungallant lines so often quoted, for which he was *justly* reproved by his charming sister, are no longer to be seen.

Indeed imagination must assist greatly in viewing this place, for every room is dismantled, every bit of carving that could be removed has been taken away, and the whole presents, like the château of Blois, merely a shell, with nothing to offer of interest except its external walls: that is all that remains of its first construction.

The principal front has even now an imposing effect from its extent, though *bizarre* from the extraordinary variety of its architecture; scarcely any two windows are alike, or on the same line, the rooms appear thrown here and there at random, the old windows having been stopped

up, the old stories divided into two floors, Grecian pillars squeezed amongst Italian walls and arcades; while, flanking two beautiful and exquisitely carved *tourelles*, one at each extremity of the façade, rise, crowning the large original round towers, the before-named gigantic Gargantua-like extinguishers!—hideous blots on the face of taste. As if these monstrosities, which did not agonize our companions as they did us, were to be perpetuated, preparations are going on to restore one of these roofs, the lead of which was lately curled completely up by a furious wind (the spirit of the injured Francis doubtless guiding the spirits of the storm), and so much damage done to the roof, that prompt measures were requisite to be taken to prevent extensive mischief.

There are two other staircases, one at each side of an interior court, of the same form and in the same taste as the double one in the centre of the building; and nothing can exceed their lightness and grace, or the beauty of the ornaments with which they are decorated. All that remains of the first part of the building is charming, the courts are spacious, and the whole grand and royal.

The park is very large, and its avenues fine, but a great deal of timber has been cut down, and no part of the grounds is in a state to offer any temptation to explore them: the long rank grass grows high and coarse, the few shrubs are choked up with briers and weeds, and desolation reigns triumphant at the neglected and dilapidated palace of Chambord! The cause of this is, that the right of property is contested: it was presented to the young Duke de Bourdeaux by *the nation*, having been bought by subscription by the friends of the Bourbons, of Madame Berthier, who possessed it from her husband, on whom Napoleon had bestowed the castle and domain. After the last revolution it became a question whether it of right belonged to the prince, as he is supposed to have no estates in France; and the law is to decide what is to be done with this possession, which every year becomes of less value. It is to be regretted that the question is not set at rest, so that either the crown or the exiled duke could claim it, for it will be totally ruined in a short time, should it remain neglected as at present.

The people who show the château are sulky

and sad, and everything around is gloomy and desolate. There are, however, some delightful bits of study, which were not to be neglected; and our friend the artist, having chosen a portion of the façade for a sketch, set himself about it, forgetting that he had left a large portfolio of other drawings, which we had been examining at the top of a tower, lying on a parapet. We were reminded of this fact by observing, from time to time, the descent of various sheets of paper, some of which quietly fell into the courts, but some were borne by the wind into pools and amongst the wet grass. A general consternation ensued when we found what they were, and every one was instantly busied in picking up stray turrets, and fountains, and castles, and façades—the stores collected in a journey from Auvergne to the present spot, all interesting, and of unspeakable value to the possessor. At last, amidst much laughter, and some scolding from his *maman*, our friend contrived to get together all his treasures, and having ascertained that all was right, set about bewailing the loss of half a dozen sheets of excellent English drawing-paper, which had gone into a little stream and were lost beyond redemption. This reminded us

of the distress of our guide in the caves of Chinon, who mourned over his broken candle having saved his own neck.

We returned from Chambord by another route through a deep wood, by a very bad road; but the glades and groves were so agreeable, that we were scarcely conscious of all the *secousses* we met at every hundred yards. On emerging from this, we came upon plains covered with purple vines, here arranged differently from many other parts. They are allowed to grow higher, and the branches are confined at the top, and tied to their sticks, so that they form garlands, from which the rich bunches of nearly ripe grapes depend, and have a most beautiful and Italian effect: this is quite unusual, and is probably done to prevent the leaves from overshadowing the fruit too much. The leaves had now become of a rich deep colour, and, together with the ripened grapes, made a splendid appearance, the tints being so *foncées* and fine. In some vines they were almost black, which we were told is a particular sort, generally used in making wine to give colour to the paler kind. The sun shining through these clusters, casts a glow over the whole scene of extreme richness and bril-

liancy: the lively conversation of our amusing companions, the enthusiasm in art of the young man, the examination of his charming sketches, and his anecdotes of adventure, made our day pass off with infinite spirit and gaiety, although we had been a little disappointed in the present appearance of the far-famed château of Chambord.

The Bibliothèque of Blois is excellent and well-arranged, and possesses many treasures. We examined here the unequalled work of M. de Bastard, which exhibits specimens of illuminated paintings from ancient MSS. so exquisitely copied as to have lost none of the delicacy and intricate beauty of the originals. The gold and colours are laid on with a perfection quite incomparable, and if they would last for centuries, like those from which they are taken, would be indeed valuable; but I fear the scarlets and greens of the present time, particularly the former, will never be found to retain their brilliancy long. This work, the title of which is, "Peintures des MSS. depuis le 8 siecle jusqu' à la fin du 16." is altogether the most splendid specimen of modern art it is possible to conceive, and is got up with a care worthy of its extraordinary merit.

Here are the gorgeous gold letters on purple ground, of the wondrous MS. of Charles le Chauve, reproduced, not fresher, which is impossible, but as fresh and perfect as the original; here are pages of the delicate and graceful initials of the Evangile de St. Medard de Soysons —its Fontaine Mystique, and all the different styles of letters and ornaments of various periods, each of the purest and most unique design; the Ecriture *Onciale Caroline*, the Initiales Zoomorphes and Phyllomorphes, from the bible of St. Martial de Lymoges; in short, all that the industry and taste of genius can accomplish in this beautiful art which, when carried to such perfection, deserves to rank with the highest.

They have also in the library, M. de Somerard's fine work, " Les Arts au Moyen Agé," which I had not before seen, and which is most interesting, before or after visiting his charming cabinets at the Hôtel Cluny in Paris.

Amongst the agreeable productions of Blois, it would be neglectful not to name its pears, and, above all, its *crême de St. Gervais*—the most delicious cream in the world, superior to our Devonshire cream, which it somewhat resembles, inasmuch as it is not like butter, which

is the fault of that celebrated *condiment*. The crême de St. Gervais is served up in little black glazed earthen cups, white inside, covered with a vine-leaf, and tied round. In this rustic state it is sent up at dessert, and is fit food for "Corydon and Thirsis," attended by the "neat-handed Phillis."

Charming as the aspect of Blois may be, illumined by a glorious sun, it has a still finer appearance at night when the harvest-moon is at the full, as was the case during our stay. From the windows of our inn, justly vaunted by our *conducteur*, the view was magnificent: the handsome bridge, unlike most of the modern bridges on the Loire, is steep, and runs up into a most inconvenient curve; in its centre is an *obélisque*, which by day is not an object of much interest from its architectural merit, but at night has a shadowy and picturesque effect, touched by the moonlight, while the heavy pillars and arches of the bridge sleep in broad shadow on the full waters beneath. A sheet of trembling silver spreads far away into the distance, and all the opposite shore is distinctly visible. The churches, hospitals, manufactories, and ranges of high buildings, with their intermixed trees, all reflected

in the river as in a mirror; a gentle breeze, and a sky of pearly transparency, with a musical wanderer seated on the steps of the bridge with his guitar, singing softly the sweetest airs, and making

> "Such a soft floating witchery of sound,
> As twilight fairies make when they at eve
> Voyage on gentle gales from fairy land:—"

All this formed a picture seldom equalled, and which we enjoyed every night during our stay in Blois.

The delight experienced by a traveller in coming to a place which he has heard but little of, and finding it full of interest, is counterbalanced frequently by discovering the inferiority of many others to their reputation. This we had found in the *cité de "toute beauté,"* Tours; and this we were destined to find in Orleans, for which town, considered one of the best in France, we set out in a diligence, which started somewhat more than two hours after its time; the cause of such arrangements being, that more passengers had presented themselves than would fill one vehicle, and not enough had yet appeared for two, therefore it was considered necessary to wait till the

proper number was got together, and then the two coaches should start fair. At length, after great lingering and lounging, — during which period our artist friend contrived to run off to make a flying sketch of some object which he had seen, and we discovered that our hotel had evidently, by its towers and walls, once formed part of an important fortress destined to defend the bridge, —we were allowed to depart, and took our way along the opposite bank of the river.

Our route lay through several bourgs, which offered but little interest; occasionally losing sight of the river, and returning again to it: Beaugency and its antique Roman square tower and fine bridge appearing at a distance, with its coteaux producing the vines which have given it celebrity.

Baulle, a picturesque village, also famous for its wine and its excellent saffron, and Meun, that delightfully situated bourg which formerly formed part of the domain of the bishops of Orleans, remarkable for its Gothic castle and church, and its iron bridge, but more so as being the birth-place of Clopinel, he who continued the famous Romance of the Rose, which De Lorris had "left half-told," and which was

translated and improved by our Chaucer, until he made it his own.

Jean de Meun,* called Clopinel from his lameness, was inferior to his predecessor, De Lorris, in imagination and descriptive talent, but was a poet of no ordinary power; his satire was principally directed against the monks, and in particular the Jacobins, then a new order; the trick he played them after his death is comic enough.

He gave directions that his funeral should be performed in their church, and when it was completed, that a weighty coffer should be placed in the hands of the pious monks who had paid him the last honours. Of course they understood that this was an atoning offering for all the evil which the daring poet had said of them during his life; and, as soon as the body had been committed to the grave, and the customary ceremonies concluded, they proceeded to examine the bequest, which, by its appearance must be of considerable value. The coffer was opened, when great were their dismay and disappointment in discovering only a few sheets of lead,

* See, for accounts of him and his works, "Specimens of Early French Poetry." 1835.

inscribed with mathematical figures. Indignant at this treatment, they hurried to disinter the body of the insolent scribbler who had so cheated them, and to cast his remains out of their sanctuary, but this was not permitted by the Court of Parliament, to whom his friends applied, and it was again honourably interred in the cemetery attached to the same church.

The little town of Cléry is opposite Meun, and we were happy to arrive at a place so famous in story, which the bigot Louis XI. held in such high esteem, and where he was buried by his own desire. It is prettily situated, and the country round very agreeable; but its chief object of interest is its beautiful church, founded in 550, as a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, and built entirely by Philip de Valois in 1330. The Earl of Salisbury, in 1428, destroyed it in part, and it was left to Louis XI. to reconstruct it with all the magnificence for which it is even now remarkable.

The principal door is wonderfully beautiful, elaborately ornamented in the best and most delicate taste; its towers and spires and pyramidal belfry, together with its buttresses, give it a monumental effect, which was the original

intention, as Louis designed it for his mausoleum. The principal nave is adorned with twenty-three windows, and, when filled with painted glass, they must have had a splendid effect, judging by those now left, which are exquisite. The ornaments of the doors of the sacristy and chapter are admirable; the garlands which wreath the pillars, and throw their clusters of flowers along the façade, are sculptured as if by the hands of fairies. The stalls are grotesque, but finely worked. A chapel of Anne of Brittany, the walls covered with her ermines, is very elegant; the pendants to the roof of a tomb, now no more, are in the highest style of art, forming thick groups of stalactite forms, carved with the most graceful patterns, and terminated with *bouquets*, that seem formed for the hand of an heiress queen. There is also a beautiful chapel of the Counts of Dunois.

The most conspicuous object in the church is the tomb of Louis XI.; whether it is the identical tomb described by La Fontaine, I do not know, but imagine not, as I cannot agree with him that it is *d'assez bonne main.* It appears so very new and clean, that it may be a work of yesterday, and the figure is so totally unlike

all that one has ever seen or read of the niggardly bigot, who passed his life in cheating the saints and his people, that I imagine it is either new or spoilt by restoration. It is curious, that with all his care to provide himself with so glorious a sepulchre, and a fine tomb, executed by German artists in gilded bronze, afterwards destroyed, there should not have been a statue of him in his own time: that his son and successors should have neglected such a duty, we cannot wonder. It appears that a monument, perhaps the one in question, was erected to him in 1622. This was placed here in 1816, and our first impression was that it represented Louis XVIII, in coronation robes, which may give some idea of its total want of resemblance to the wearer of the old cap, with its wreath of leaden images. This monarch is clothed in a long and ample ermine robe, silk stockings and hose, and a capacious ruff surrounds his throat; no indication of the costume of the period appears, and still less correct is the round, unmeaning face which surmounts the plump and comfortable figure. The description of La Fontaine is as follows:

"Louis XI. est enterré à Cléry: on le voit à

genoux sur son tombeau, quatre enfans aux coins: ce sont quatre anges et ce pourrait être quatre amours, si on ne leur avait point arraché les ailes. Le bon apôtre de roi fait là le saint homme, et est bien mieux pris que quand le Bourguignon le mena à Liège.

> "Je lui trouvai la mine d'un matois;
> Aussi l'étoit ce prince dont la vie
> Doit rarement servir d'example aux rois,
> Et pourrait être en quelques points suivie.

"A ses genoux sont ses heures et son chapelet, et autres même utensiles, sa main de justice, son sceptre, son château, et sa Notre Dame: je ne sais comment le statuaire n'y a point mis le prévôt Tristan: le tout est en marbre blanc et m'a semblé *d'assez bonne main.*"

The pedestal is supported by four columns, and the inscription runs thus:—"A la mémoire de Louis XI. roi de France, et de Charlotte de Savoie, son épouse."

The famous Virgin of Cléry, said to be the very identical image so beloved by Louis and so potent in miracles, is placed in a niche over the grand altar. She is black and ugly enough to be the original, but is dressed out in tinsel, beads,

roses, and every sort of finery, more like a black girl at a "Dignity Hop" in the West Indies, than anything else that can be imagined. The good people of Cléry appear more pious or more ignorant than their neighbours, for they seem extremely proud of this remarkably disagreeable figure,—a fit object of adoration to the royal hypocrite, but very unlikely to be the real *she*, burnt of course at the Revolution.

In the town of Cléry the house is shown which Louis inhabited, the hotel where Louis XIII. rested, and which was also visited by Louis XIV. and Madame de Pompadour. This habitation has still ceilings painted in fresco, with devices, emblems, and Cupids: it has a fine iron balustrade to the staircase, ornamented with LL interlaced in copper, well executed.

We were amused at observing a name over a door which spoke strongly of a Scotch origin, and must have descended from one of the archers of the Scotch guard, for who else could have been the ancestor of MERLIN HUME, *tonnelier?*

Saint Ay, built in an amphitheatre on the descent of a hill amongst all its vines, is on the opposite side of the river, and must command

a charming view of picturesque Cléry, its magnificent church, and the smiling country round; after this, there is a succession of vineyards, and then the plains of La Sologne, and those of La Bauce Orléanaise, and the Val de Loire.

CHAPTER XII.

The Val de Loire and its Coteaux.—The Little Mirrors.—Marhaït de Kergluj.—Ballad of the Mirrors.—La Sologne.—La Bauce.—Le Gâtinais.

On both sides of the river is a district called the Val de Loire, which extends to a certain distance, and most of the best towns of the department of the Loiret are comprised in it. On the right bank are Orleans, Gien, and Beaugency, which are on the borders of La Bauce. On the left bank are the Faubourgs of Orleans, those of Gien, the little towns of Sully, Jargeau, and Cléry; these are on the borders of La Sologne.

Immense vineyards clothe the *coteaux*, which hem in this valley and reach from one extremity of the department to the other, the wine they

produce being more or less prized: those of Cléry and St. Mesmin are white and much esteemed; the red wines of St. Denis en Val are thought the best in the Orleanois. Its meadows are very rich and fruitful. A part of the district called Le Gâtinais, of which Chartres is the centre, joins the Val and contributes its corn and wine to the general store.

The great variety of manners to be observed in the inhabitants of these districts is curious: in some they differ so strongly as scarcely to be recognised as the same people: the peasants of the Val and of Sologne are beings of entirely opposite qualities, although they are separated only by a hill and a few fields. Civilization is now doing wonders, and doubtless these differences will soon cease, or be at least softened down, but they still exist in a surprising degree, considering all the changes to which France has been subject for so many years.

At Mareau and St. André the peasants may be said still to speak in the romance language; at least, many of their expressions are the same: their dress is totally different from that of other towns, and neither its form nor quality has been altered from time immemorial. Their manners,

habits, and particularly their *dances*, are not the same as those of their nearest neighbours.

The *Pardons* of Bretagne have extended to this part of the Loire, and some of their other customs appear, to me, similar to those of the Bretons. At these meetings, when religion and gaiety are combined, it is a saying of the country —

Pour vivre sans envie
Et qu'on ait bien son lot,
Il faut que la Marie
Prenne ici son Pierrot.

Which means simply, that at the Pardons each young girl is free to choose a partner for the season, who shall attend her to all the fêtes which take place, of which there are many.

The grandest of these is that of N. D. de Cléry, the Sunday which follows the 8th of September. This fête, which is nearly the last of the season of fine weather, is remarkable: it has features like Long-champs, in its processions of carriages of all descriptions, and the variety of costumes displayed may vie with the fashionables of the Bois de Boulogne. The mysterious inhabitants of the villages of Mareau and St. André here appear in all their glory, and their dances excite the interest and surprise of all

their neighbours. The women wear enormous full thick petticoats, flat caps, and peculiar-shaped corsets: the men have short breeches, enormous buckles in their shoes, hats with large brims turned up, several waistcoats, and their coats almost all of the same tint, which is dark claret colour. At this festival hospitality prevails, and the whole neighbourhood is turned into a fair, where the *jongleur* and the *troubadour*, of the present day, exhibit their powers of attraction.

A custom prevails, which is particularly pleasing and romantic, and has a refinement about it which would seem to have been taught by the courtly natives of Blois, but that it evidently is derived from the most distant villages of uncivilized Brittany, as the poem, which I shall presently give, will prove.

Each Pierrot, on taking leave of his Marie, when the fête is concluded, presents her with a bouquet, which is only sold on that occasion. It is composed of artificial flowers of fanciful shapes, whose cup is formed of a pearl, made of looking-glass, and little convex mirrors are disposed between the leaves and flowers. These bouquets are religiously preserved by the young

girls, as they are often a pledge of proposed marriage at All Saints, or Christmas. They are placed at the head of their beds, and are frequently looked at with great interest to see if the little mirrors remain untarnished, as otherwise, it is a proof of the infidelity of the youth who was the giver of the tell-tale treasure.

The following simple poem, taken from the source whence I have drawn others, in the brief account of Bretagne I have attempted, alludes to the custom of the *little mirrors*, and is, as usual, of a deeply melancholy character. It would appear, by the conclusion, that the young girl on whom it was composed by the rustic minstrel, must have committed suicide. She is called in the verse, Marhaït de Kergluj, or, in the strange dialect of Vannes,* *Varc'hait doc'h Gerglujar.*

* It is somewhat singular that in this neighbourhood is a town called *Vannes:* perhaps a colony of Bretons established themselves here.

THE MIRRORS.

DIALECT OF VANNES.

Chileuet holl, o chileuet,
Ur zonik néué zo sauet.

Listen all and listen long,
To the minstrel's latest song:
'Tis of Mary whom ye knew,
Flower that in our hamlet grew.

Oft her mother said apart,
"Mary,—oh, how fair thou art!"

"Ah! what boots it being fair?
Happier other maidens are!
I am with'ring on the stem,
For I may not wed, like them.
When the apple's tender cheek
Blushes with its rosy streak,
It is sought and gather'd free,
But, if left upon the tree,
Soon 'twill perish and decay,
And, like me, will fade away!"

"Pretty child, lament no more,
Wait but till a year be o'er."

"If I die before the year
Thou wilt shed the fruitless tear.

Build a tomb, if I should die,
On it let three nosegays lie;
One must be of roses' sheen,
And the rest of laurel green.
When two lovers pass that way
Tender grief their hearts shall move;
Each shall choose a flower, and say
'Tis her grave who died for love:
For around her shining hair
Was no marriage garland tied,
No bright mirrors, glittering there,
Bade us hail her as a bride!'

"Ah!—no bell for me shall sound,
Place me not in hallow'd ground;
Dig my grave beside the way,
Never priest a prayer shall say:
None the flower-strewn grave shall see
Of a wretch who died like me!"

La Sologne forms part of the Val-de-Loire, on the left bank of the river, and spreads from Gien as far as Blois, and near to Orleans. It is a less productive district than most of the other parts, and its wine is not of the first quality. Its natives are a strange and *chétive* race; they are called Solognots, and are wretched in health, manners, and intellect. Their complaints are supposed to be caused by the bad water of this part of the country, and their gene-

ral style of living. Their apathy and indolence prevent the introduction of improvements which would probably alter their present state for the better. They are not without cunning for their own interest, so that it is the custom in the neighbourhood to apply to an artful but apparently irresolute and apathetic person, the term of *un niais de Sologne.*

The Romans seem to have cultivated this district, and fixed themselves here, to judge by the numerous remains which are frequently discovered. In spite of its few attractions the Solognots are more attached to their plains than are the Baucerons, or the natives of the Val or the Gâtinais.

Their piety seems to arise from ignorance in the extreme: they change the names of the saints as they are impressed by the sound, attributing to them powers corresponding with those sounds; as, for instance, they pray to St. Sulpice, whom they turn into *Supplice,* for a cessation of the *supplice* of their pain in sickness; St. Firmin is St. *Fremin,* and is supposed to avert the *staggers* from animals. Their priests seem to have allowed them to remain in this "blissful state," either from ignorance or design,

but it is not likely, and, it is to be hoped, that it will not last much longer.

La Bauce is another district which is spread out on each side of this part of the Loire; that portion of it in the department of Loiret is called La Bauce Orléanaise. It was formerly woody, but is now covered with corn lands and fields and immense plains: occasionally pretty situations occur, but in general there is a want of good water, and a recurrence of marshy ground called *mares*, which are unwholesome and dangerous. The vine is nevertheless cultivated in many parts, and the inhabitants are strikingly different from those of La Sologne; for they are generally well grown and robust, and even the women are large and masculine: the manners here are not dissimilar to those of the Bretons; particularly in the circumstance of the supremacy the men exercise in their households, and the meetings of relations and friends at certain fixed periods of the year. Their style of living is exactly in opposition to that of the Solognots, for they indulge in absolute luxuries, in that respect differing from the Breton; they drink wine in consequence of the badness of the water; are frank, generous, and hospitable, proud of their country,

and inclined to be mercenary. It is singular to observe the extreme difference between two districts so closely united as to locality, and surprising that the one should not profit by the experience of the other, both having to contend with similar disadvantages of country.

Le Gâtinais, which joins La Bauce and La Sologne, is rather an uncultivated than a barren district. Its most celebrated produce is saffron, which is considered of the best kind; its game is also good, and, in many parts, corn, honey, fruit, and vines are in abundance. The natives are lively and healthy, and more citizens of the world, more ready to adopt improvements, than those of the other divisions of the country. They are, in general, civil and honest, except as regards the temptations offered of cheating in their dealings respecting their saffron crops: they are rich and independent, and consequently more civilized than their poorer and more dependant neighbours.

CHAPTER XIII.

ORLEANS. — The Cathedral. — Churches. — Plenary Indulgence.—Agnés Sorel's house.—Bolingbroke.—Pithiviers.—Yèvres le Grand.—St. Salomon.—Malsherbes.—La Chapelle la Reine.—The Royal Forest.—The Barrier.

RAWING near this ancient city, once all that remained to a king of France, with Bourges, of his fair inheritance, and celebrated as having given a title to the heroic saviour of her country, we were much struck with the fine approach to it from the left bank of the river, after crossing its handsome bridge. We arrived at sunset, when a broad curtain of crimson and gold was spread over the sky, and the majestic city was surrounded with all the glory of the departing sun: its magnificent cathedral and numerous towers rising proudly from the mass of imposing

buildings round; the river wide and full, and but little encumbered with sand, and all announcing the importance of one of France's proudest towns, and nearly the central one of her dominions. Scarcely, however, is the bridge passed, and the Rue Royale entered, than an entire change comes over the mind of the beholder, and,

> "As he comes near
> And sees more clear,
> A long way off he wishes him again."

Dirty, slovenly, crowded, and commercial appears everything; no grace, no elegance, no gaiety; —and then, perhaps, for the first time, one feels the reason why Tours is so much vaunted, as the absence of commercial bustle is felt, and the better appearance of its shops must be confessed.

If we were disappointed in its principal streets, and the gloomy, ugly appearance of its inns, what was our annoyance, when we began to explore, to find its squares without grace, its buildings irregular without antiquity, its statues below contempt, its churches devoid of interest!

The Rue Royale is, like that at Tours, a continuation of the bridge, and is wide and long; but the eye is shocked by seeing, at every third

door, quantities of ready-made clothes set out for sale, all of coarse materials for the common people, giving a *Rag-fair* effect—anything but pleasing; while along every house-front hang draperies, as in Paris, of red, white, and green, &c., greatly adding to the disagreeable *ensemble* — for, as all these streamers are necessarily dingy and faded, and soon become dirty in a great town, they can give no elegance to the scene, they are at all times tawdry and ugly, and their total suppression would be a benefit. The shops appear good, and the town is very vast, but has no beauty whatever to recommend it, and is, in general, slovenly and ill kept, while the odours are such as can with difficulty be endured: in this latter respect Orleans is infinitely worse than any town we had yet met with, which is surprising, as most of the old streets and houses are cleared away, and there is, consequently, less excuse for such a failing.

The Cathedrale de Sainte Croix is considered one of the finest religious edifices in France, and is certainly extremely grand, though far less interesting than many we had seen. Its vastness, extraordinary height, grace, and lightness, are wonderful, but though the grand entrance

is splendid, another equally elaborate appears, to me, entirely spoiled, by having a fine Grecian portico introduced amongst the Gothic piles around. The portico itself is admirable, but it can have no business there, and does not in any way answer to the rest of the architecture, which is in tolerable keeping, considering the different modern periods at which the cathedral has been built. Its foundation was previous to 865, at which period the Normans burnt it. It rose from its ruins in 999, and was once more destroyed by the Calvinists in 1567, who left only six of the pillars of the nave, and a few of the chapels: these are still to be traced amongst the more recent adornments. Henri IV. laid the first stone of the reconstruction, and built a great deal; since that time, it has always been going on, and is not yet finished. It appears to me extraordinary that, while the original intention has been carried on in every other part, this unfortunate Grecian door-way should be allowed to disfigure the building with its incongruity. I do not know by whom it was built, but am inclined to accuse Louis XIV., whose contempt for the architecture of the middle-ages, showed itself in his constant introduction of classical bits,

wherever he could put them, without taste or meaning.

High mass was being performed while we were in the church, and the effect of the solemn music was extremely fine, the voices of the priests and choristers swelling along the majestic aisles, and echoing through the vaulted roof, the coloured glass from the spacious windows casting a thousand tints on the fine marble floor, as the sun-gleams pierced the many-hued panes. But where was the congregation to respond to the prayer of the priest, and to gaze with reverence on the mystical ceremony? a few old women, several of them beggars, were kneeling here and there near the vast pillars, scarcely a chair was occupied, and it seemed as if the whole service had been got up for our edification alone. Yet almost all the other places of worship in Orleans are destroyed, and turned into manufactories, stables, and workshops, and this enormous pile is capable of containing pious thousands. This, though peculiarly remarkable in so large a church, is not a singular instance; for we had been frequently struck, throughout our journey, with the emptiness of all their temples, the few who attend being infirm women, beggars who have

other motives besides religious ones, though their gains cannot be great,—and very young people.

One of the chapels is entirely formed of black and white marble, and has the most magnificent effect of any I had ever seen; no tinsel, or flowers, or silver draperies, to disfigure the altar, which looks grand and solemn, as an altar should, instead of being desecrated by the trumpery which generally overloads them.

On the whole, both the exterior and interior are worthy of admiration; the two towers and principal portal being as fine specimens of grace and lightness as it is possible to behold.

The Church of St. Pierre le Puellier, is the most ancient in Orleans: on the wall of a cloister, which now forms one side of the outer court, is a series of tableaux, in relief, of admirable execution, representing scenes in the life of our Saviour, in good preservation. The church itself has been dreadfully defaced, so much so as to present little to observe, but what there is, is of the earliest Norman style. We were considerably amused by reading an inscription on a slab of marble, put up by a curé of Orleans, in 1722, who had received, as he states, *very particular favours* from *Nôtre Dame*, and in gra-

titude erected this monument or shrine, at which, by the Pope's decree, whoever, of either sex, belonging to the Confrérerie of the Immaculate Conception, shall say mass every Friday for seven years, shall receive *plenary indulgence.* This indulgence extends also to *souls in purgatory,* in perpetuity.

There are a great many portals and towers of churches which, when you reach them, are found to be coach-houses, *salpétrières* &c., and the filthy state in which many of the exteriors are found, renders it impossible to examine them. We were wearied in seeking for once celebrated churches, which, when we discovered, disappointed us thus; the few that are still places of worship are dreadfully mutilated, and have lost almost all beauty.

It has been *intended,* for many years, to raise an equestrian statue to the Heroine of Orleans; but, in the mean time, the town is disgraced, as well as her memory, by a figure like an actress, from Franconi's, placed in the principal square, and so bad that it would not deserve mention if it were not to receive its deserved censure. Nothing can be less elegant than the place in which it stands, surrounded with irregular build-

ings, neither old nor new, but of the *juste milieu* of all that is least interesting.

The quays are deserted, slovenly, and without beauty, and the whole town dull, ugly, and dirty!

The house called of Agnés Sorel, is in the Rue Tabourg, No. 15, and is extremely curious. It is now occupied by a *marchand de sabots*, and is shown to all comers, as it is one of the great sights of Orleans, together with that of François I. in the Rue de Recouvrance, No. 28, at the corner of the Rue *de la Chèvre qui danse.*

The supposed habitation of Agnés Sorel is built with remarkable taste and care, the windows beautifully sculptured, and the doors of entrance of carved wood most elaborately worked in bas-relief, representing a perfect history in little. The lower court is well-paved in a sort of mosaic of black and white stone: an antique well is at one extremity, the iron-work of which, and the extremity of the leaden pipe against the wall, are highly decorated; the latter with azure and gold, like a twisted ribbon.

On the left of the court, is a gallery, supported by three arcades of round arches, with strong and fine pillars, surmounted by richly-executed capitals, of great delicacy. This gallery sustains the

corridor of the first story, the ceiling of which is adorned with panels, carved with much taste, representing hearts pierced with arrows, lighted torches, cupids, a tortoise, a sun, and, in one, a *plate of pears*, of that sort called *rousselets*, of which, it is to be supposed, Agnés was fond, and which also might have formed an allusion to her birthplace of Touraine, celebrated for this fruit. Fleurs-de-lis also occur here and there; and there are several heads placed along the wall.

The staircase is beautiful, and runs from the lowest depth of the cellars to the height of the house; the steps are six feet long, and two feet wide, in some places, and on the landing-places the roof is elegantly carved in pendants.

A large saloon, with an immense chimney, exhibits much carving, and the remains of gold and azure ornaments, which must once have incrusted it; but all is wearing away, and disappearing as the room is used for the purposes of the house. There is no doubt that the house must have been thus decorated about 1470, and there is no reason to question its having been built by Charles VII, for his ladye-love. One of the heads presents a resemblance to that of Agnes, as shown on her tomb at Loches, and

another is like the head of Charles VII, on the coin of his time.

There are several interesting sites in the neighbourhood of Orleans, as the gardens of the ancient abbey of St. Mesmin and its little peninsula, so dear to the monks; opposite which is the château de Randon, Caubrai, where the Duc de Guise was assassinated by Poltrot, and the château de la Source, one of the great objects of interest to strangers and the townspeople. The small river Loiret takes its rise in the gardens of this château, which is remarkable as having been the retreat of Bolingbroke during his exile. Voltaire visited it, and is said to have composed some of his works here.

The *gèvre*, or gulf, in which the waters of two rivers meet, is a large circular basin, formed by nature. The small river Duis enters at the upper part, and is lost in its serpentine way; while, what is singular, it does not mix with the current of the Loiret, which here issues forth, but maintains its course, each preserving the respective colour of its stream, one ending, and one beginning here. The scenery is pretty and the drive agreeable, to this point.

We found the inn where we stopped dull,

shabby, and by no means good, in any respect; and the waiting-maid, probably a Sologuot, to judge by the style of her attendance and general manners. Here, as at most of the inns, good and bad, in France, there is a lamentable want of bells, and it is next to a miracle to gain a hearing in the house. When once in your rooms you are supposed to want nothing, and may fret in vain, till it pleases the waiters to appear, or you must descend and find them where you can.

Pithiviers, in the Gâtinais, is about ten leagues from Orleans, and we rested there on our way to Fontainebleau. It is one of the pleasantest little towns we had met with, built on an elevation, beneath which flows the winding river Œuf. The name of Pithiviers or Pluviers is supposed to be derived from the circumstance of its neighbourhood producing great numbers of *plovers*. The partridges here are the finest in France; indeed, nothing can exceed their excellence: the pies made here are as celebrated as those of Chartres of great renown. Pithiviers is also famous for *almond cakes*.

The town is very irregularly built, has a fine square, and some good houses; all the ancient

parts seem to have been cleared away and new streets made, which are neat and clean: young trees, in double rows, border the boulevards, which surround the town, and the whole has a pleasing and cheerful aspect. It was formerly a place of very considerable consequence, and had a castle and walls, remains of which are still to be seen. From the ancient ramparts the view is extremely pretty, and there is a rural quiet about the whole place altogether delightful. Its fortress was built by Aloïse de Champagne about 990, and must have been a stronghold; the large tower is now altogether destroyed, only the huge circular remnants of towers, along the ramparts, tell of what was once so powerful. After standing attacks and sieges, for many ages, from the Norman, the English, and the Leaguers, its fortifications were dismantled by Henri IV, in 1589.

The château of Yèvre-le-Grand, can be seen at a distance, rising with its proud battlements, and the ruins of the fine church of St. Lubin, in its village, Yèvres-le-Chatel, from the height which commands the charming and extended valley beneath. Not far off, is the mineral fountain of Segrais, where is still shown the grotto

given by Aloïse to St. Gregory of Armenia: and several country-houses, where exotic plants and trees are cultivated with care and success. The walks round about are delightful, and everything looks inviting in this pretty quiet place; the people are civil and obliging, and we found our inn excellent as far as it went, though "our content and imagination" considerably "amended" it; for our landlady and her husband, the civilest of people, had to apologise for their *best* room being without *any* furniture, but a very clean white bed, a marble table, and two chairs, which had been cut down to stools,—all owing to the dilatory conduct of the upholsterers, who delayed bringing all the splendid furniture, which, they assured us, had been ordered six months before. When it arrives, I have no doubt, with the addition of a stove, which is to stand where no fireplace now is, that the hotel will quite amaze travellers arriving from Paris, by its grandeur. Meanwhile, we were infinitely amused, and, "promise-crammed," slept well, being awakened early by a brilliant sun pouring into our chamber through uncurtained windows, which will some day exhibit draperies of crimson and white.

The church of Pithiviers is dedicated to St. Salomon, and is extremely beautiful and large, and has all the appearance of having once been of great importance. The chapels are adorned, as in the cathedral at Orleans, with white and black marble, which has a very fine effect. The portals and towers are very grand; the high spire leans extremely, but seems quite solid. This church might, perhaps, have been connected with the abbey of St. Pierre, close by, which was of the order of Cluny, of which no-

thing is left. This town took a conspicuous part, in consequence of its neighbourhood to Orleans, in the troubles of the Revolution, having its *club*, and doing homage to Robespierre. The Cossacks, commanded by the Hetman Platow, pillaged and destroyed all they approached, which may account for the little remains of antiquity beyond the church, which escaped more than could reasonably have been expected.

Its principal commerce is in saffron, for which this part of the country is particularly famous.

Nothing can be prettier than the rural landscape round, as you quit Pithiviers, on the route to Fontainebleau. The town seems seated in the midst of gardens; its cathedral-shaped church rises to its full height from amongst the buildings, its high spire a landmark for miles; a perfect bower appears to surround it, and village after village comes out in the verdant distance, presenting now a fine Norman square tower, now a picturesque pyramid: all here is either corn-land or vineyards, and all is rich and glowing: after a time, the country becomes flat, and then heathy downs succeed, perfumed with

wild thyme, and enamelled with many-coloured flowers.

It was high-market at Malsherbes when we drove through, and, except at Chinon, I never saw so many country-people collected together; not only in the market-place, but swarming in every street, so that it was with difficulty we could make our way through. Our driver was one of the most good-natured, *nonchalant* creatures in the world, and had a word to say to every one, and a ready joke and compliment for all the pretty *paysannes*. As soon as the town is passed, the road lies through a magnificent forest for more than a league, the features of which are peculiar. Enormous blocks of grey stone are strewn about between the thick high trees in every sort of picturesque situation, and of every form imaginable.

A plain country, rich in corn-land, follows the forest; but we had first, a long ascent, during which our *conducteur* walked by his vehicle. Presently, we observed a cart, drawn by a donkey, and driven by a remarkably pretty young girl, scarcely fifteen; an old market woman, who might be her grandmother, was seated comfortably in the cart, while the girl walked, hold-

ing her whip in her hand. She had a figure and face to attract the attention of any one, and they were not lost upon our gallant driver, who hailed her with a joke upon her skill as a charioteer, to which she replied gaily, smiling and showing a row of pretty white teeth. From time to time, as we proceeded up the hill, our friend looked back in evident admiration, which the little coquette was not slow to observe: he made several exclamations to himself, and, at last, as if impelled by a sympathy he could not resist, he fairly left his horses and carriage to their fate, and joined his rural beauty, who was some little distance *en arrière*. She had been very bold and saucy while she felt that he must of necessity take care of his conveyance, but when she found that he had abandoned them, she drew nearer to her own cart, and blushing deeply, began whipping her donkey to conceal her confusion: the old grandmamma, who seemed enjoying the scene, now entered into conversation with the bewildered lover, and the girl, recovering herself, recommenced a system of flirtation, which seemed to delight the swain, who, totally forgetful of all besides, allowed our carriage to creep on at a snail's pace, till, finding the horses

on the point of going to sleep, one of the passengers recalled him to his duty. With many a longing, lingering look, did he rejoin us, and after sundry callings out, and wavings of hands, he reseated himself on his box, and with one heavy, deep-drawn sigh, he raised his arm, inflicted a few sharp lashes on his beasts, uttered the emphatic "*en route!*" and left the scene of his sudden impression, evidently "stabbed with a white wench's black eye — pierced to the heart with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft." This, no doubt, was the beginning of an attachment; which "bud of love," as our friend frequently passed that road, and the village beauty had occasion, or would, in future, make one, frequently to drive her donkey to Malsherbes, "might prove a beauteous flower when next they met."

The drive continued to be delightful as we advanced, and at La Chapelle la Reine we found a remarkably neat village, with the most beautiful of little churches. We went into the clean, well-kept churchyard to examine it, and found one of the most perfect specimens of early Norman architecture we had seen since we had left Avranches, and the charming village of St. Loup: but this was in a more elegant style, and presented

features of superior delicacy. The principal doorway is of the early pointed form, with pillars crowned with peculiar-shaped foliage; between the leaves, grotesque heads, appearing as if they were the fruit produced. One single line of rounded zigzag, large, and projecting beyond the arch, runs round it, and all is as perfect as possible. Another door is of the circular form, also uninjured, and the ornaments wonderfully sharp and fresh. The tower is square, with the circular Norman window. On the whole, it is quite a gem, and seems to be appreciated, for it was carefully locked, and the field in which it stood and the walks and gates leading to it are arranged with English neatness. There seemed some remains of towers as we passed through the bourg, which was infinitely the cleanest we had ever beheld. At Uri, the next village, there is a church on the same model with a square tower much higher, which appears very perfect.

We had now reached the royal forest, and for several leagues pursued our way with its magnificent groves on each side of us, dark, thick and solemn. There is something very imposing in travelling, particularly in the dusk of evening,

through an enormous forest with no interruption for leagues to the ocean of leaves which spreads out broad and grand around, above, on every side.

We had heard, with some misgivings, of the camp at Fontainebleau, as it was expected that the King and royal family would shortly arrive to visit it, in which case the usual permission for strangers to see the château would cease. This was very provoking, as we had come out of our way on purpose to see this, one of the most interesting châteaux in France.

On arriving at the barrier some delay took place, from the necessity of the coach being examined to discover whether any of the baskets contained grapes, which pay a duty. Our driver, whose love affair had detained him on the road, was extremely annoyed at what he considered a vexatious inquisition, and seemed resolved to afford the officers of the customs no assistance in their search. He refused to say whether a large panier on the top contained white or black grapes, and gave them the trouble of opening it, when it was found full of peaches: much to his mischievous delight they had some difficulty

in closing the basket, and as they pronounced him free to proceed, he drove on with many exclamations of discontent at their severity.

We expected to be asked for our passport, but no notice was taken of us further than our being reported as "des dames Anglaises:" those cabalistic words had carried us unquestioned from one end of France to the other, and prevented our meeting with any disagreeable adventure, for which courtesy we are in duty bound to be grateful.

Every inn in the town of Fontainebleau was filled to overflowing, and we began to despair of finding accommodation, when the "Aigle Noir"—we only knew our host by this title given him by his fellows—took us under his protection, and by his means we procured a good lodging in the town kept by an excellent French woman, devoted to the English, for she had lived in an English nobleman's family for some years previously to her marriage with the retired *militaire* whom she now called her lord. As the family with whom she had resided were known to us, and we had some recollection of her and her pretty charge in former days, we were excellent

friends immediately, and nothing could exceed her attention and civility. In a few minutes we were quite at home, and settled with her, before an hour was passed, all that was to be done in the way of sight-seeing for a fortnight: but she could give us no hope for the château; the words, "the King comes here to night," shut out all hope!

CHAPTER XIV.

FONTAINEBLEAU. — Rendezvous de Châteaux. — Courts.— Novel mode of Payment.—Henri IV. and the Spanish Ambassador.— Divorce. — Mysterious Machine. — Royal Murderess.—Letter of Christine of Sweden.—Lavallière.— Louis XVI.—Napoleon.—Interior of the Palace.—ĐI.— François I. — Galleries. — Salles. — Chapels. — Princesse Marie Gardens.—*Les Carpes.*—Fontaine de Belle Eau.— Avon.

Care selve beate !
O quanto volentieri
A revederve i' torno : e se le stelle
M'avesser dato in sorte
Di viver a me stessa, e di far vita
Conforme a le mie voglie,
I' già co' campi Elisi
Fortunato giardin de' Semedei,
La vostr' ombra gentil non cangerai !

GUARINI.

THE history of the palace of Fontainebleau is intimately connected with that of France : every part of this vast edifice awakens some recollection and recals some memo-

rable event. Here some mark of the feudal times appears, and we follow the changes and improvements which bring us to the period when the pencil of Primatice adorned the walls of this gorgeous place with records of the valour of François, and of the loves of Diana and her royal slave. Gabrielle, and Henri, and Sully, Louis XIII. and Richelieu, Louis XIV. and Colbert, meet us at every step, and the shade of Napoleon seems hovering over the towers where he signed the scarcely legible paper which gave his power away!

It was left, however, for Louis Philippe to revive all the faded glories of this splendid abode of kings, and royally has he accomplished the design which he is said to have formed many years ago, without the expectation then of seeing his wish realized.

No sooner did he become king of the French than his first thought was for Fontainebleau, and it is under his especial direction that the palace has reached the state of splendour in which it now appears. The ancient paintings have been well-restored, the ancient gilding retouched, the carvings and ornaments carefully replaced, and all that was destroyed imitated in the very best and most correct manner.

All our fears were, in a few days, put an end to; a simple application to the king himself, as travellers, and English, was sufficient to obtain us the most courteous admission, and every facility we could desire. It is impossible not to feel grateful for so much kindness, and to appreciate politeness so distinguished.

We saw, therefore, in all its details, a "*rendez-vous de châteaux*," which the French delight to call it, adopting an expression used by an English traveller, who was amazed to behold the extraordinary number and variety of buildings which, joined together, form the whole of this singular château. It possesses none of the correct formality of Versailles, nor has it either the merits, or perhaps the defects, of most of the royal residences of France. "None but itself can be its parallel." *

From Louis VII, who dates a charter, in 1169,

* Cardinal Bentivoglio wrote, in 1624, to the Cavalier Marini, as follows,

"I have been once to Fontainebleau, and to-morrow I shall return; it is truly a magnificent abode, worthy of such a king; and although it is formed of several buildings joined together, at different times, without either order or symmetry, there is in this confusion an air of grandeur and majesty which occasions an agreeable surprise."

from Fontainebleau,* to the present day, it would seem that parts remain; though the hand of François I, and that of Henri IV, if not now the most conspicuous, are the most interesting. Louis le Jeune constructed a chapel here, which the great martyr, Thomas à Becket, consecrated, when forced to take refuge in France from the anger of his outraged master.

Philippe Auguste passed much of his time here, and reposed from his warlike toils, after contending with the followers of Mahound and Termagaunt.

St. Louis came here to wander in *ses déserts*, as he called the glorious forests which surround the royal dwelling. He added much to the castle; and one of the pavilions, restored by Francis I, is still called by his name. Here it was that when, on a bed of sickness, he thought his end approaching, he spoke these memorable words to his son:

"Biau fils, je te prie que tu te faces amer du peuple de ton royaume, car vraiment je aimerais mieux qu'un Escot venist d'Ecosse, et governast le peuple du royaume bien et loïalement, que tu le gouvernasse mal apertement."

* Fontene-Bleaude.

The château of Fontainebleau is composed of six courts; the Cour du Cheval Blanc; Cour des Fontaines; Cour Ovale, or du Donjon; Cour de l'Orangerie, or Garden court; Cour des Princes, and Cour des Cuisines. There are three principal entrances; the *entrée d'honneur* by the court of the Cheval Blanc, that by the Kitchen court, and that by the Allée de Maintenon, the Chaussée Royale, and La Porte Dorée.

The staircase on the exterior, built by Louis XIII, in the Cour du Cheval Blanc, is remarkably fine; it rises to the height of a terrace, placed along the apartments on the first floor.

The Court of the Fountains has a fine effect: the Sphinxes, who guard the fountain, are grand and imposing, but the appearance of the buildings round is irregular.

The Cour des Princes is the smallest, and is remarkable as having been the portion of the castle occupied by Christine of Sweden. The *Galerie des Cerfs*, where the famous tragedy of Monaldeschi was acted, is on the side looking towards the garden; but all traces of that deed are now cleared away, though, for a long period, the blood on the floor, like that of Rizzio at Holyrood, was carefully preserved.

Every step one makes in this palace revives some interesting *souvenir*. François Premier would engross the attention altogether, were it not that the fair Diane de Poictiers usurps so large a share to herself, as in none of the royal abodes is her cipher and device so frequently repeated as on the walls of Fontainebleau.

The husband of Mary Stuart was born here, and spent the leisure of the principal part of his brief reign within these walls, where his lovely wife must, probably, have accompanied him. Anquetil, in his work "Esprit de la Ligue," relates the following anecdote, somewhat characteristic of the manners of the period:—

"The court came here to pass the season: it was very numerous, and numerous also were the persons who followed it, some for payment of wages and debts, others for arrears of pensions and rewards. Tired out with the continual importunities of these people, the Cardinal de Lorraine, first minister of Francis II, caused a gibbet to be erected near the château, and published, by sound of trumpet, an edict commanding all persons, of what condition soever, who came to the court to solicit, to quit the neighbourhood in the space of twenty-four hours, on pain of being hanged."

From this palace the proud Catherine, with her royal child weeping in her arms, was compelled by the Guises to depart for Paris. Two years afterwards that same child, Charles IX, who at that time was uncorrupted by his harpy mother's influence, received in this palace the ambassadors of the Pope, the King of Spain, and the Duke of Savoy, all sent to urge vigorous measures against the Protestants. The young King put them off with vague promises, his answers being dictated by the virtuous Michel de l'Hôpital. He professed, that all his actions towards that portion of his subjects should be regulated by strict justice. Unfortunately for his memory, he kept his word but ill. His brother, Henri III. was born at Fontainebleau. The poet Desportes made these verses on the occasion for the young prince :—

Nymphes de ces forêts, mes fidèles nourrices,
Tout ainsi qu'en naissant vous me fûtes propices ;
Ne m'abandonnez pas
Quand j'achève le cours de ma triste aventure ;
Vous fêtes mon berceau, faites ma sepulture,
Et pleurez mon trépas.

But little was done in the way of embellishment by this *gentle King*, who nevertheless loved

the arts as well as murder; but the political troubles of his reign occupied all his attention, and one is glad to find that he left no record of himself in these walls.

Several of the children of Henri IV. were born at Fontainebleau. An anecdote is related of the honest Bearnais, to whom the ambassador of Spain had been representing the great advantage of allying himself with Spain by means of the marriage of the royal children. Suddenly Henry, who had long been listening with impatience, stopped him short, saying, "Pray understand, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, that my children are well enough born not to want for good matches when they are old enough to be married."

On another occasion, when he accompanied the ambassador over the palace, the Spaniard, jealous of the magnificence he saw everywhere, on arriving at the chapels, which had not been yet repaired and embellished as they were afterwards, remarked to the King, that he was better accommodated than God himself. Henry, who was always prepared with a reply, answered briskly: "That is not surprising, because in France we lodge God in our hearts, while in

Spain you are content to place Him in temples of stone."

Gabrielle d'Estrées passed great part of her time with the King here, and only quitted the château to go to Paris on a *pious errand* during the Holy Week, when she was taken ill and died. Henry, though at first inconsolable, soon forgot her for Henrietta d'Entragues, who managed so well, as Sully said, "*de cajoler le Roi*," that she obtained from him a promise of marriage, which the true friend of his master got possession of, and tore in pieces in the Galerie d'Ulysse before his face, yet was forgiven.

At Fontainebleau the negotiations were carried on for the divorce of Henry and Marguerite de Valois; and two hundred and ten years afterwards the same ceremonies were gone through to separate Napoleon and Josephine.

In what is now the Jardin Anglais occurred that celebrated scene, which does so much honour to Henry, when, in spite of all the malice of the enemies of Sully, to whose influence he was obliged to yield in some degree, the monarch threw himself upon the friendship which had never deceived him, and frankly confessing all to

his minister, triumphed over their machinations and secured his own happiness.

Henry delighted to live amongst his workmen at Fontainebleau, and directed the additions and improvements which were made in his time. The cardinal-eclipsed King, his son, lived much here, and finished what had been so well begun in the preceding reign.

In the year 1642, all the world of Fontainebleau was astonished by the arrival of a nondescript machine, which was nothing less than a chamber constructed of wood, finely ornamented, and covered with crimson damask. It was borne by eighteen *gardes-du-corps*, who walked with heads uncovered, and were followed by an escort of other guards, ready to relieve them from distance to distance. Within, propped on pillows, and surrounded with every luxury, lay in state the sick cardinal, who, having been taken ill at Valence in Dauphiné, had chosen to have himself thus conveyed, in order to avoid the jolting of an ordinary carriage. This chamber was so large, that, at many places where they stopped, the walls of the houses were necessarily broken down to admit it. In this equipage

Richelieu arrived at Fontainebleau, which he left to go to Paris, where he died soon after.

About nine months from this time Louis XIII. followed his all-sufficient minister to the tomb, to the great relief of the court, which, to use the words of Madame de Motteville, "s'ennuyait de ce que le roi ne pouvait achever de mourir."

There was not sufficient space in the château of Francis I. and Henry IV. for the magnificent court of Louis le Grand, and therefore was it that he built Versailles: his visits to Fontainebleau, though he was fond of the retreat, were only occasional; and it henceforth served as a place of refuge to unfortunate royalty. The unfortunate Henrietta, widow of Charles I, resided here some time; and fifty years afterwards Charles Edward the "*desdichado*," sought the same roof.

In the year 1657 these walls were polluted by a crime which had no parallel in the records of modern times. The murder of Monaldeschi and all its particulars, as related so *naïvely* by Le Père Lebel, are too well known to make it necessary to detail them; but the letter that the haughty Christine wrote to the minister Mazarin, when the king's displeasure was signified

by him to her, is less frequently quoted. It is a masterpiece of effrontery and insolence; yet, a fortnight after receiving it, both the king and the cardinal paid a solemn visit of reconciliation to the royal murderess.

LETTER OF CHRISTINE QUEEN OF SWEDEN, TO CARDINAL MAZARIN.

"MONSIEUR MAZARIN.—Those who have detailed to you the affair of Monaldeschi, my equerry, were very ill-informed. I think it strange that you should compromise so many people in order to inform yourself of a fact which does not concern you. I ought not to be astonished at your conduct, however absurd it may be; but I could scarcely have credited that either you or your proud young master would have dared to exhibit towards me any marks of resentment.

"Learn, all of you, valets and masters, great and little, that it was my pleasure to act as I have done: and that I neither am obliged, nor will render an account of my actions to anybody, be they who they may; above all to a *braggadocio*

like you. You give yourself singular airs for a personage of your rank; but whatever reasons you may have had to write to me, I do not care enough about them to concern myself on the subject for a single instant. I desire you to know, and to repeat it to whomsoever it may concern, that Christine is totally indifferent to the opinion of your court, and still less to yours: that I have no occasion, in order to compass my own vengeance, to have recourse to your formidable power.

"My honour required what was done; my will is a law which it is your part to respect: to be silent is your duty; and there are many persons for whom I have no more regard than for yourself, who would do well to learn how to conduct themselves towards their equals, before they venture to make more disturbance than is necessary.

"Know further, Monsieur le Cardinal, that Christine is a queen, wherever she may chance to reside; and in whatever place it is her pleasure to live, the persons who surround her, cheats though they may be, are better than you and your confederates.

"The Prince de Condé was right when he ex-

claimed, at the time when you kept him prisoner so inhumanly, at Vincennes; 'This old fox will never cease to outrage all the good friends of the state; until, at last, the parliament shall turn off, or severely punish, this illustrious rascal of Piscina.'

"Take my advice then, Jules; conduct yourself in a manner to merit my favour; it is a study to which you cannot too much apply. God preserve you from ever daring to utter the least syllable against me; for, were I at the other end of the world, I should be aware of your proceedings. I have friends and courtiers in my service who are as adroit and as watchful as any you can boast of, although they may not be so well bribed."

Lavallière followed in these shades the footsteps of Diana and Gabrielle, though neither her merit nor her beauty could secure the constancy of her royal and fickle lover, who formed for her *parties de châsse*, and *fêtes champêtres*, in the forest, where princes attended them,* and

* Sometimes when a collation was served in some of these expeditions, Le Grand Condé, and le Duc de Beaufort, formerly foes of the young king, used *themselves to place the dishes on the table.*

all the fair, and noble, and royal ladies of his luxurious court paid homage at her shrine.

Louis XV. was born in this palace: and here was signed the fatal Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, of which Christine de Suède wrote to Rome, "I look upon France at this moment as on a diseased person, whose arms and legs have been cut off in order to remove a malady which patience and judicious treatment would, in the end, have entirely cured: now I fear that the evil will continue to increase, and become incurable."

Louis XV. was married at Fontainebleau, and his eldest son, father of three kings, died here. During the reign of Louis, frequent visits were paid to this palace, which began to be discontinued in the time of his successor.

The king having given orders that public fêtes should be discontinued, when the court went there in October 1786, none but those attached to the household followed. The king was much offended, and was injudicious enough to revive the famous regulations of Louis XIV, which obliged all those of the court who held great offices to reside wherever the royal family chose to live, and to follow them in all

their journeys, under the penalty of losing part of the revenues which they received. But this measure, which was easily carried into execution in the time of the *Grand Monarque*, was far from giving satisfaction, or succeeding, at that period, when the times were so much altered, and royalty was every day losing some of its splendour.

Napoleon found Fontainebleau in a state of great decay, and, on the occasion of the expected arrival of the Pope to crown the Emperor, he had so promptly employed workmen of all descriptions, that the palace was in a state fit to receive the illustrious visitor, who was there treated with great consideration, not imagining that he had seen his future prison. Seven millions of francs were expended in beautifying this imperial abode, where the Emperor delighted to reside, and where many magnificent fêtes took place under his reign, and many important events occurred. Josephine's place was taken by the daughter of the Emperor of Austria, who did not love him better: then came the abdication; then the adieux, and the great drama, of which he was the hero, was closed.

It would be a very long task to enumerate

all the beauties of this magnificent place: one chamber seems to rival the other in grace and brilliancy, and each gallery effaces the remembrance of a former.

The gallery of Henry II. is now restored exactly as he built and decorated it, with its magnificent ceilings and splendid chimney-piece (an unequalled work of art), all its fresco and encaustic paintings by Primatice and his friend and pupil Nicolo, given back to the day as though the artists themselves had superintended the restoration.

The chimney, which deserves particular attention, is the work of the sculptor Guillaume Rondelet: its bronze satyrs, eight feet high, supporting fruit in baskets, are no longer there, having been converted, in 1793, into instruments of war; but the columns which replace them are fine, and the gold, and azure, and enamel, and marble, elegantly mingled to produce garlands and branches, and festoons, and ciphers, are inimitable. Diana's crescent gleams above all, and the entwined letters of her lover's and her own name. Again, on the beautiful and elaborately-ornamented ceiling, divided into octagonal compartments, on a gold or silver ground, in relief,

they appear; the rose and crescent intermingle with the united ĐI; and, on large scrolls, appears, every here and there, the mysterious inscription which Catherine must have looked on with no pleasant glance—"*Donec totum impleat orbem,*" which has been translated, "*Jusqu'à ce que ma maitress soit reine.*" The walls are similarly ornamented, and, sometimes, a triple crescent is interlaced, surmounted by a star or a royal crown.*

The flooring is of beautifully arranged woods,

* In the curious collection of M. de Somerard, in the Hôtel Cluny, amongst a *crowd* of other wonders, all delightful to the lover of the middle ages, is a chamber, called of François I, fitted up with *objets* belonging to his time. The door of this room came from Diane de Poictiers' house, at Anet, and is remarkable for its elegant carving of the usual device of Diana and Henry: round the keyhole, which is finely worked in iron, are inscribed the words *Donec totum impleat orbem.* It is surprising that the vindictive Catherine should not only, for so many years, have endured the public triumphs of her rival, but that, when she became mistress, after Henry's death, she did not efface from the walls of all the châteaux the obnoxious devices, which were so little complimentary to herself. She appears, instead, to have contented herself with some slight exhibition of disdain, and with reclaiming the crown jewels, which were in Diana's possession; and by the exchange of Chaumont with Chenonceau, seemed to forget all injuries. Diana was, perhaps, useful to her in many ways,

of native growth, and is laid down in all the beauty of *marqueterie*. I imagine that no finer room can be seen in Europe than the Galerie d'Henri II.; and it is far more interesting than the most gorgeous chamber in a modern palace, which I have ever seen.

The Galerie de François I. is yet to be restored. His salamanders, flames, arms, trophies, and ciphers, appear, but their splendour is faded; the beautiful ceiling of walnut-wood, with compartments, formerly gilt, is there, still fine, but asking for the artist's hand. Its quantities of

and probably assisted her views against the Huguenots, of whom both were jealous and furious persecutors. Diana was, at least, thirty-five years old when Henry, who was only eighteen, fell so desperately in love with her, who was more than suspected of being mistress to his father Francis. For twenty-three years his passion for her was undiminished, and at the fatal tournament, where he lost his life, he wore her colours, *black and white*, and she, with hypocrisy worthy of the rest of her life, always continued to wear mourning *as a widow*. Brantome describes this remarkable woman as eminently graceful and beautiful at the age of sixty-five "si belle que *je ne sache* cœur de rocher qui ne s'en fût ému." She died at about sixty-six. These verses, which she addresses to Henry II, describe, in the style of the period, her struggles against her love and her weakness:

Voicy vraisment, qu 'Amour un beau *matin*
S'en vint m'offrir flourette très-gentille:

carving, caryatides, masks, and ideal forms, executed by Paul Ponce, will doubtless soon revive, and the frescos of Rosso shine again in all their lustre,— allegories which represent the glories of the Roi Chevalier, and which are consequently interesting.

Francis delighted to employ the great artists, whom he drew to his court, in embellishing his favourite palace. Cellini projected under his direction, a magnificent bronze fountain, of colossal size; which, however, was not executed. This capricious genius, who was not celebrated for his grateful acknowledgment of favours, says

Là, se prit il, aournez vostre teint,
Et vistement visliers, et jonquille,
Me rejettoit, à tant que ma mantille,
En éstoît pleine et mon cœur en pasmoit,
(Car, voyez vous, flourette si gentille
Estoit garçon frais, dispos et jeunnet.)
Ains tremblottante et destournant les jeux...
Nenni... disoi—je.— Ah! ne serez deçue,
Reprit Amour: et soudain à ma vue
Va présentant un laurier merveilleux.
Mieulx vault, lui dis-je, être sasge que royne
Ains me sentis et fraimer et trembler.
Diane faillit, et comprendrez sans peine
Du quel *matin* je praitends reparlez.

MS. de la Bibliothèque.

of the King: "We" (speaking of himself and Guido Guidi, a Florentine physician,) "were proud of our talents, and were encouraged to excel in our respective professions, by the patronage of a prince so grand and magnificent. I may indeed say, that whatever I did of grand and beautiful, was the work of this wonderful monarch." *

Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, il Rosso,

* Benvenuto Cellini arrived in France in 1537; but, offended by the cold reception of il Rosso, he resolved, notwithstanding the *gracious welcome* of Francis I. to return to Italy almost immediately, where he was imprisoned in the Castle of St. Angelo. By the generous intervention of Francis he was at length released, and returned to France, where he was most royally provided for; nevertheless, his pride, and jealousy of Primatice, kept him in constant agitation, and at length wearied out the patience of the King, whose desire was always obliged to yield to his caprice; and at last he abandoned all the greatest advantages which ever were offered to an artist, and quitted France for ever—a step he never ceased to regret. On one occasion, he went to St. Germain with a vase of silver-gilt, destined for the Duchesse d'Etampes, and was so irritated at the loss of time which he was obliged to submit to before he could be admitted to her presence, that he hurried away, and, in the height of his indignation, offered the vase to the Cardinal de Lorraine as a present.

Another instance of his furious temper, is sufficiently remarkable. He tells, in his Confessions, that one of his models, a beautiful French girl, named Catherine, who sat to

il Primatice, Nicolo dell Abbate, Vignole, and numerous other great artists combined to adorn this fine palace with their works. It is deeply to be regretted that at the period of the Revolution an immense quantity of splendid carving in wood, on cabinets, *commodes*, &c. was taken away and destroyed or dispersed: some of the beautiful pieces of furniture which must have decorated these galleries, may occasionally be met with, and nowhere in greater preservation than in the Hôtel Cluny in Paris, where Francis seems to live again in his domestic *entourage*.

How wondrously beautiful must these chambers have appeared when filled with all those objects of art and *virtù* with which François I. delighted to surround himself. Chairs whose high backs and wide arms were carved after the most delicate designs of Primatice and il Rosso; tables covered with the enamelled porcelain of

him for thirty sous a-day, having offended him: "Giving way entirely to my rage, I seized her by the hair and dragged her about the room, *kicking and beating her till I was quite fatigued.* She swore she would never come near me again; but the next morning at daybreak she came, threw herself on my neck, covered me with kisses, and asked, if *I was still angry with her?*"

Leonard de Limoges, and the wondrous Venice glasses of flower-forms which could secure against poison. A bed whose four posts were armed knights, sculptured in oak; boxes covered with goldsmiths' work, where the hand of Cellini or of François Briot had been busy; groups in marble by rare Italian artists, on pedestals of antique form, covered with relievos of the most graceful workmanship. In the embrasures of the windows one can imagine those coffers covered with coloured leather, which served for seats in the time of Charles VII; a stand supporting one of those *mirouers de toilette* whose frames were so richly worked in ivory and gold; and perhaps spread beneath it a *tablier ouvré*, a luxury sent from Damascus or from Venice; while round on various *coigns of vantage* might repose *reliquaires* of rock crystal mixed with *chlorite*, on which the point of a diamond has traced the forms of animals, flowers, fruit, or landscape. Perhaps a little book, whose cover is of gilded copper worked as if in lace-work, with the salamander and the crowned F introduced amongst the foliage, the *horoscope* of the owner being drawn within and the secrets of astrology revealed to the initiated.

These, and much more, one can fancy filled the chambers of François I, and one could wish to see those at Fontainebleau furnished as they still are at Chenonceau. If some of the treasures of M. de Somerard's collection, enough now to form half a dozen museums, were transferred to this beautiful palace, there would be nothing left to desire.

The Galerie de Diane was constructed and decorated by Henri IV; it was formerly full of medallions and pictures by Ambroise Dubois, which have all disappeared. Napoleon and Louis XVIII. restored this chamber, and modern artists have replaced by their allegorical designs those which figured forth the loves of Henri and Gabrielle.

From this gallery opens a chamber, which has been entirely formed by Louis Philippe in the ancient Pavillon de Noailles. It is exquisitely beautiful, and in the best taste: the walls are covered with arabesques, the ceiling in compartments, and all answering to, but, if possible, surpassing in elegance, the rest of the building. A staircase connects this room with the private gardens. Another fine *salle* newly built by the present King, is called by his name, and is very

grand; the doors superb, the pillars handsome, and the whole extremely rich. The Salles des Gardes is in equally good taste.

The most ancient chapel in the palace is that which was consecrated by Thomas à Becket, St. Saturnin; it was restored under François I, and completed under Louis XIII. The windows are filled with coloured glass from the designs of that charming and interesting Princess, Marie d'Orleans Duchesse de Wurtemberg, *one of the best artists* in France, to judge by her unequalled statue of Joan of Arc, the most chaste conception of the present age.

Another chapel is that of La Sainte Trinité, established by Louis XI. Henri IV. restored it; his cipher and that of Marie de' Medici *

* "The house of Medici," says the author of the Discours Merveilleux sur la Vie de Catherine de' Medici, "was for a long period hidden amongst the lowest refuse of the people at Florence. It began to rise by means of a collier who had a son an apothecary, *who took the name of his profession;* and as in the present day we see people taking for devices the emblems of their trade, as tailors their scissors, masons their hammer or trowel, so this doctor adopted *five pills*, as it is their habit to order an uneven number to their patients." This is a singular derivation of the armorial bearings of this celebrated house.

ornament the walls. The Duke of Orleans was married to the Princess Helène of Mecklenburg in this chapel in 1837.

The Porte Dorée, which is the gateway between the Cour Ovale and that part leading to the Avenue de Maintenon, is one of the most celebrated sights at Fontainebleau, and is wonderfully magnificent: it was built under Francis I, and the frescos of il Rosso have been carefully restored.

Nothing can exceed the beauty of the ceilings and walks throughout the whole range of countless chambers, public and private; and every one has some peculiar feature to recommend it, either for its vastness or its elegance, or some souvenir attached to it. One is shown as the apartment where lodged the Emperor Charles V. when received by Francis: one of Marie Antoinette; and all reviving "thoughts and recollections sweet and bitter."

The gardens are as charming and as magnificent as the palace; they infinitely excel in beauty and variety those of Versailles: and, though planted in some parts with long avenues of clipped trees, there is much more nature and grace, even in the absence of the statues, than

at that tediously-formal royal residence, so uniformly grand and imposing. The state of the soil, nevertheless, did not appear to promise such a result of industry as they now exhibit, to judge by the anecdote told of Henri IV, who, walking one day in the gardens with the Duc d'Epernon, met the gardener, with whom he began to converse. The king complained at the meagre appearance of the parterres, and the few flowers and shrubs he saw. "Sire," said the good man, "I can make *nothing come* in this ground."—"Sow Gascons," answered Henri, looking slyly at the Duc d'Epernon; "*they come everywhere.*"

Lenôtre laid out most of the gardens as they now appear; the lakes, and fountains, and groves, and terraces, are really delightful, and, as the fountains were constantly playing, and the swans in motion, while we were there, the effect was animating and brilliant. This is the part open to the public; the English garden is beautifully laid out, and the fine Etang and its pretty pavilion are objects of great interest, particularly to the strollers who frequent this part for the purpose of watching and feeding the enormous carp, who come in shoals to receive the offerings daily and hourly brought to them, and on which

they appear to thrive, for they are perfectly gigantic, of all ages and hues, some perfectly grey and looking extremely venerable. The contentions of these creatures with their rivals, the swans, for biscuit and *brioche* are truly comic, and the *naïve* exclamations of the grown-up children who amuse themselves on the banks of this beautiful lake, leaning over the high wall, and throwing crumbs of discord to the assembled finny multitude, no less so: "Sont-ils donc *des carpes !*" "Ah ! quelle bête !" "Est-il niais !" were terms which we used to listen to with infinite amusement, as we, with little more philosophy, stretched our necks and arms over the parapet, idly enjoying the commotion below.

In the Jardin Aglais is the fountain which gave name to the palace and town, which is said to have inspired Malesherbes, with the following quatrain:

> "Vois-tu, passant, couler cette onde
> Et s'écouler incontinent ?
> Ainsi fuit la gloire du monde,
> Et rien que Dieu est permanent."

An immensely long and very fine trellis, covered with grapes, extends along a wall the whole length of that part which is called *the*

park, on a high raised terrace, which is a most agreeable walk, from one point of which the picturesque church of Avon is seen beyond the trees, closing a fine turfed walk of great extent. The fine vine produces, in ordinary years, from six to seven thousand pounds of grapes, called *chasselas*, the finest of which are served at the royal table during the months of autumn.

Another delightful walk is through the fine avenues of the park which border the long canal, and on reaching the gate at the extremity, to follow the road which leads to the village of Avon. The pretty old church is very ancient, of the tenth century, and is curious for many reasons: a slab of marble at the entrance tells that the victim of Christine was buried here: we read the words—

"Ci git Monadelxi,"

and shudder at the fate of the unhappy and false favourite.

The heart of the great persecutor of the Jews, and destroyer of the Order of the Templars, Philippe le Bel, who was born at Fontainebleau in 1262, was buried in this church, together with that of his queen, the heiress of Navarre.

The tumulary stone, on which is engraved the figure of a king with some scarely legible gothic letters, is still to be seen at the entrance of the choir. There are several others to be traced on the pavement more or less preserved, but no tombs. The church, with its pretty tower, is remarkably picturesque, and a charming study for an artist.

CHAPTER XV.

The Forest.—*Existence Bocagère.*—Grand-Véneur.—Parties de Châsse.—Délicieuses Solitudes.—Points de Vue.—Samoys.—Moret.—Thomery.—The Vignerons.—The Chasselas.—The River.—The Quay.—The Champion.—The Escape.

N entire summer might easily be passed at Fontainebleau, and the whole of this unrivalled, beautiful and extensive forest, be unvisited. Every day may be employed in rambles, on foot, on horseback and in carriages, and every day new beauties are to be found.

It is not only the rural charms and deep seclusion of these enchanting glades, that delight the wanderer amongst their shades, but the splendid points of view, the stupendous rocks and extensive prospects that meet him at every

turn. It is impossible, on entering the forest, to take a wrong route; all are fraught with such deep interest, and possess such varied beauties.

We met with some agreeable and intelligent French people, who had come, like ourselves, to explore, and with them we made a party almost daily in the forest, sometimes walking for leagues, resting in every pleasant nook and at every splendid point, till the whole day was consumed in this *existence bocagère*, than which nothing could be more enjoyable, for the weather was exquisite, with nothing to desire, and all seemed to concur to render our *séjour* agreeable.

The forest is the chosen haunt of the artist, who can there study the sublimest scenes, and find *accidents* of all kinds necessary to his art. A crowd of young men from Paris are constantly roaming about, on pictorial works intent, amongst the eternal shades of Fontainebleau; and matter may there be found for all compositions. The poet is equally at home here, and the *romancier* finds food for his inventions. The *Grand Véneur* is now too much "frighted from his hallowed haunts" to appear as he did, with hound and horn, in his sable garb, with his livid countenance and gigantic stature, to Henri

IV. He could, indeed, scarcely discover game sufficient to engage him, for since the last revolution it has almost entirely been destroyed, the last great hunter being Charles X. whose mind was chiefly occupied in "sports and pastimes" of that description. Occasional *parties de châsse* still occur; and it is a fine sight, to stand on a rocky eminence and see the flying deer rushing along the precipitous ravine below, followed by the sweeping train, with horns and dogs, and shouts, which echo among the magnificent avenues; but these are rare, as are the wild boar, stag, and smaller "*deer*."

The botanist may find enough to employ him here, for numerous and remarkable are the herbs and plants which he meets in his rambles. It is the dryest and most healthy forest, perhaps, in Europe. Immediately after rain has ceased the sandy soil becomes dry, and there is seldom a period when it appears damp or gloomy.

The description of an author of the last century, Professor Béranger, gives a lively picture of the more severe character of the Forest:—

"Elle est affreusement belle. Ces vieux chênes, ces roches cariées, noires, informes; ces blocs de grès entassés au hazard, à moitié ex-

ploités pour l'écarrissement des pavés ; ces hêtres élancés dans les airs ou couchés à terre, ébranchés par la foudre ou prêts à tomber ; voila ce que j'ai vu dans les plaisirs du Roi."

François I. called his forest, with justice, *ses délicieuses solitudes.* It was Henri IV. who established the *Route Ronde,* from whence nine principal points spread out, and an infinity of smaller divisions grow out of them. There are direction posts at every turn ; nevertheless, so numerous are the roads, that it is difficult for a stranger to find his way ; but no one can regret the circumstance, as the more he wanders the more charmed he must be, in these delicious "mazes lost." There seems no end to the variety they exhibit : now chains of high rocks meet the view, between the crevices of which spring up trees of magnificent growth ; immediately afterwards you arrive at a wide plain of sand and heath, which again conducts to a pine grove ; then a fine mountain, covered with light foliage, overlooking a valley of grey rocks, hurled in confusion down a precipitous descent ; beyond rises a steep hill, dotted with rocks, and bristling with shrubs and wild-looking trees. Then a wide marsh, without a trace of vegetation, which the *ignis fatuus* alone

inhabits; and at the edge of that a thick *bosquet* of enormous oaks, whose trunks are wreathed into fantastic forms. Then, a series of hollow caverns, some filled with the finest sand; the entrances festooned, and adorned with wild flowers and feathery grass; then darker caves, without a blade or leaf near them; picturesque buildings, occasionally, serving as hunting lodges; and in other spots the ruins of ancient monasteries. After which, for leagues, avenues of beautiful trees, of the most luxuriant kind; now, an opening of velvet turf, surrounded by an amphitheatre of gentle hills, now a plantation of young firs, and the *Pin-Sylvestre*, which flourishes here; in fine, all of sylvan beauty, that can be imagined, combined with the wildest and most savage nature.

To name a few of the beautiful *points de vue* in the forest, is all I can venture to do. Let every visitor to Paris, not quite a slave to the gaieties of the splendid city, hurry in autumn to Fontainebleau, and no longer neglect, as has been too much done, a treat within the reach of all, who must be but indifferent observers and admirers of the sublime and beautiful, if they do not acknowledge the exquisite delights of one of

the most charming situations in France. I had never heard it sufficiently praised, or indeed, spoken of with any enthusiasm by French or English, except by one dear friend, who possesses all the taste for which both nations are celebrated, in their way, who had lived some happy years in the palace, where her husband was governor, and who could appreciate and enjoy what she had often urged me in vain to visit. Judging by St. Cloud, Versailles, and other French palaces, I could not bring myself to feel a wish to go to Fontainebleau, and now seem to "awake as from a pleasant dream," and would willingly "sleep to dream it o'er again."

The mail de Henri IV.—So called because the spot was chosen, being nearest the château, for the *Jeu du mail.* There is some similarity, in the fine, broad avenue which conducts to it, to the long walk at Windsor. It terminates in a very high hill, from whence is a wild and extensive prospect on one side, and the château on the other, with part of the town in perspective. There are a hundred walks, all beautiful, diverging from this.

Les Rochers et la Vallée de la Solle.—Rocks and trees, huge blocks, crowned with magnificent fo-

liage, all confusedly hurled into the green abyss of an immensely extensive valley, bordered by high hills, with blue mountains in the distance. Occasional waterfalls rushing down from rock to rock, and lost in streams which run like silver threads beneath.

Les Gorges d'Apremont et de Franchard.—This is a fine, wild, savage district, where piles of rocks are thrown one upon the other, to an immense height, and where the ground descends with its accustomed irregularity, forming *gorges* of tremendous depth. In the most retired part rose a monastery of Mathurins, in the time of Philippe Auguste, a few walls of which still remain, attached to which is a house belonging to one of the *gardes de chasse.* This is a spot celebrated for its fête, which all the youths and maidens of Fontainebleau are intimately acquainted with. The *Roche qui pleure,* which is near, is a fine mass of grey stone, through which the rain-water, received in its hollow basins, filters and drops into a free-stone reservoir below, through the pores of the rock.

Mont Aigu, La Gorge aux Loups, Les Roches des Deux Sœurs, La Fontaine Desirée, La Vallée du Nid de l'Aigle, Le Mont Chauvet, L'Antre des

Druides, Le Cœur du Diable, and many others, are all objects of extraordinary interest, and can all be seen in turn. The lover of scenery will, of course, not be content to drive along the high roads which lead, in all directions, through the forest, but will diverge wherever he can. He must be a good walker, and not mind a little fatigue, nor must he be out of humour at not finding his way immediately, as he is sure to be fortunate in losing himself, even if he return to his home three hours after his dinner hour, as we generally contrived to do.

But the true *champêtre* plan is to dine in the forest. One day we spread our rural repast upon a commanding height, beneath the shelter of a mass of piled up rocks, in a situation commanding an extensive prospect on the outskirts of the forest, with the village of Samoys below us, and the bright river Seine and its gliding steamboats far off. We were so pleased with the prospect, illumined by the brilliant light of the setting sun, that we resolved to descend and visit the village and its fine church, whose square Norman tower attracted us at a distance. On our way an incident altogether Swiss occurred; a Ranz des Vaches was blown by a peasant,

and, presently, descended from the hills a line of no less than seventy beautiful cows, taking their way to the village, which we entered much at the same time. We were met by numbers of peasants bringing home grapes in panniers overflowing with crimson juice from the half-pressed bunches. But here ended our romance; for of all the filthy, disgusting places it had been "our lot to mark," the village of Samoys is the most horrible, and we quickly returned to our carriage and our drive through the groves on our return, lighted by the lamp of the glowworm, and amused by the tales of our host and *conducteur* of his campaigns with Napoleon, and his feats of greenwood craft.

Another of our expeditions was to Moret, a pretty town, the scene of one of Napoleon's tremendous struggles, whose antique gates, splendid church, consecrated by Becket, old castle towers, and ruined bridge, are "*toute beauté.*" From thence we took our way to Thomery, the famous place, from whence come all the grapes called *of Fontainebleau;* and here we saw the head quarters of "THE VINES" in perfection.

This *hameau* is the richest, and the inhabitants are the most industrious, of the department of

Seine et Marne. It rises in an amphitheatre, on a *coteau* by the side of the forest, the foot of which is bathed by the river. Every house is well-built, and serves, in every part, to support a trellis loaded with grapes; all the *streets are vineyards,* for not a foot of wall but is covered with trellis, from which hang clusters of the rich *chasselas,* so justly renowned. The white are of an opal tint, touched with ruddy gold; the purple, less esteemed, are beautiful to behold, and nothing can exceed the order and scrupulous neatness with which these treasures are preserved and cherished: five or six thousand baskets are sent from hence every week to Paris, where they are sometimes sold *au poids de l'or.*

We were introduced by our host and hostess, who guided us, on the occasion, to a family of vignerons, at whose house we rested, and examined their vine-gardens, which are curious and interesting. Rows of walls are erected, on which the grapes are trained; these are divided into compartments, about every twelve rows being again surrounded by a wall; every attention being paid to their position as regards sun and heat.

These vignerons are extremely wealthy, but mere peasants in their manner; they work hard and live well; but, to judge by the specimen we saw, they are not very *récherché* as to the furniture of their domiciles, apparently contenting themselves with bare walls and a few chairs; except the best room, where the usual handsome bed and ornamented chimney are to be observed.

They pack the grapes, with care, in baskets of various sizes, and in a dry season they will keep a long time: as the summer had been wet, and the grapes we bought had been gathered in the rain, we did not find the boast true, of the possibility of their remaining good for months.

From Valoin we embarked in the steam-boat for Paris, being less afraid of the sands of the Seine than those of the Loire, which render the voyage uncertain and tedious. The river was full and fine, and the banks so varied and beautiful, as to allow a comparison between them and the borders of the Thames. The boat, however, was crowded to excess, not only with passengers, but with baggage, which was piled up in a most inconvenient manner, in the centre

of the deck, masking the view on one side. The camp had just broken up at Fontainebleau, and all the world was returning to Paris. Melun, Corbeil, Charenton, appeared by turns, with their respective beauties, and the vine-covered banks, and rich woods, which slope down to the river, give an animated, and graceful, and characteristic effect to the scene.

The approach to Paris, by the river, is very singular: the great city comes out by degrees in all its vastness; tower after tower, bridge after bridge, and building after building, succeed each other in constant variety; and the solemn, dark, patriarchal masses of Notre Dame, have an imposing air as they welcome the stranger to the walls of the old town.

Nothing could exceed the confusion on the quay on the arrival of the steam-boat; the useless, senseless screaming and hallooing of hundreds of unaccredited *commissionaires* on shore, the asseverations and commands of the officials on board, until we fairly sat down in despair beside our baggage, waiting till the hubbub should subside. Our passports were demanded, and our keys,—*why*, no human being could imagine, as it was next to impossible that our trunks should

be filled with Fontainebleau grapes, and the small basket we had was not concealed. Everything was opened on the deck, and thrown about with the utmost carelessness; the custom-house official all the time looking another way, so that if there had been anything contraband, he had no opportunity of detecting the fact, which mode of proceeding made it more vexatious: add to which, our *accrédité*, who kept insisting, with raised finger, that we should remain perfectly *tranquille*, very coolly broke the hinges of one of the trunks in forcing it to close, after having disturbed its contents. Finding that he had committed an error, he began to use every *blandishment* that penitence could suggest, and vowed, with clasped hands, that we should have no reason to complain of him further, for that he would protect and assist us to the last gasp. To judge by the wondrous noise on shore, the jeers, and jokes, and vituperation as every passenger landed, one might have imagined a champion really necessary, and, accordingly, we followed closely the steps of our friend, who led us through the mob, elbowing and driving away the ranks who saluted us with cries of "des Anglaises! des Anglaises!" certainly "*pour rire.*"

Having procured us a *fiacre*, deposited our goods, and seen us fairly packed, we named our hotel, presented our penitent knight with a gratuity, for which he made us fifty bows, and gave us a hundred thanks, doubtless, inwardly chuckling at the liberality induced by fear,—and left the quay, resolving to abandon our former intention of making a voyage from Paris to Rouen by the steam-boat, in spite of the beauty of the *trajet*.

CHAPTER XVI.

Paris.—Churches.—Monuments.—The Louvre.—The Spanish Gallery.—Spanish Masters.—Murillo.—St. Bonaventure.—The Spanish Watteau.—Adventure in the Hotel of Madame du Barri.

ROM the time that had elapsed since we last beheld Paris, in the year of the *Trois Jours*, we looked for and found a great change, and, in many respects, also a great improvement. The new church of La Madeleine, so much vaunted, struck me as in rather questionable taste, as did that of Notre Dame Lorette, splendid as both are, but unfit for places of worship: the latter would make a magnificent ball-room or theatre. Gilding, painting, carving, and marble in profusion, are employed in these gorgeous churches, but after being so long accustomed to the severe simplicity of the Norman

buildings, or the chaste and graceful delicacy of those of later date, our eyes could only be dazzled by the glare and glitter round us, and we hastened to behold Notre Dame again in its glory and majesty; to the church of Chilperic, St. Germain l'Auxerrois, that of St. Gervais, with its beautiful pendant roofs and twisted pillars; to the Palais de Justice, and its *Pas Perdues and Sainte Chapelle;* to the wonderful Roman ruin in the heart of Paris, the Palais des Thermes; and lastly to that curious, extraordinary, interesting museum of the middle ages, so well appreciated by us now after our researches in Normandy and Brittany, the Hôtel Cluny.

The Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, has been completed since we last saw Paris, and is a splendid monument. The wondrous Egyptian pillar in the Place Louis XV, appears to me, if not misplaced, at least rather *incongruously* surrounded by *candelabras* of gold and bronze, and fountains, and statues, which are as unlike the severe and simple pile as it is possible to imagine, and entirely spoil the effect it would produce, if left "alone with its glory." The fountains, after being completed, are discovered to be top-heavy, and are

about to be taken down; it seems, therefore, that the English are not the only architects who spend their time in doing and undoing, and who are unable to judge of an effect till it is too late.

I found the galleries of the Louvre much extended since I last saw them: rich in art of every description, ancient and modern. It would now require days to go over them, and weeks to examine them room by room. The Egyptian treasures are very great, and also those of the *antique* collection: the enamels of the period of François I. and later, extremely numerous and beautiful. The naval museum is complete and interesting; a part of the mast and other *débris* of La Perouse's

> " ——— fatal and perfidious bark,
> Built in th' eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,"

brings melancholy reflections to the mind.

The enormous stores of sketches and drawings of masters, in portfolios and framed, make one blush to remember that England could have become possessed of an equally valuable collection, — " could — but did not!" But the crown of all curiosity, wonder, and admiration,

now in Paris, is the Spanish gallery, which is certainly very fine, and has some splendid specimens of that magnificent and gloomy school; nevertheless it greatly disappointed me, and visiting it in the hasty manner I was obliged to do, my impression was, that I had never seen so many hideous and ill-painted pictures brought together before. The subjects of the greatest part of them are revolting and horrible, being representations of martyrdoms and punishments too terrific to think of, much less look at and examine. Even were these painted in the very first style of art, they must be always unfit for a public gallery: their only fitting place is in the gloomy cell of some bigot; and I cannot but think that had M. Taylor, instead of treasuring them, rejected every one of these monstrosities he would have done the state more service, than in bringing them to Paris to show this turbulent and excitable people how to commit —

"The oldest sins the newest kinds of ways."

Had Marshal Soult, when he made such havoc amongst the convents of Spain, committed whole heaps of this disfigured canvass to the flames,

the world might have thanked him; for it appears to me that the best Spanish gallery that could be made is in his own possession, and, with a few exceptions, every picture far exceeds any in this.

The best are the Velasquez, of which there are several admirable—his portrait, by himself, a head only, is unrivalled for truth, finish, and breadth, except by a similar one of Murillo, which is its worthy rival. Morales *el Divino* has some monks in all the perfection of sackcloth and ashes, with attenuated limbs and ghastly faces, that start from the canvass, and look more *or less* than human; the great master, Zurbaran, has also a monk in his rocky cell, at prayer, surrounded by every attribute that can make the scene appalling and awful; it is terribly grand, but hideous. Ribera follows in the same style, with torture, blood, wounds and starvation in his train, imitated and sometimes equalled by less known painters, now, perhaps, first introduced to a Parisian public in all their gloom and fearful power,—such as Theotocopuli el Greco, Francisco Camillo, Luis Tristan, Herrera el Viejo, and a crowd of others, most of whose subjects are as little pleasing as the rest.

Alonzo Cano presents some fine compositions; but, in spite of the cry that has been raised against Murillo's genius of late by those who, perhaps, are but partially acquainted with his countless works, so unequal in their power and beauty, and so different from each other, and who are apt to confound the master's hand with that of his numerous imitators and pupils—he stands the first amongst his great brethren. Who that has contemplated some of the divine faces of his virgins, and angels *made perfect*, can agree in the common accusation against him of vulgarity and want of grace?

If the fine picture, of which we ought to be proud in our poverty, the *Pedrosa Murillo*, *cabined* in one of the closets of what is called our National Gallery, have defects, its glorious truth and beauty outshine them; and though the earnest face, with its devoted gaze of the young mother is Spanish and peasant-like, it is not less real and affecting than the refined, beatified, sublimely-lovely faces of some of his Virgins of the Ascension.

Murillo, as he must have painted his pictures for different communities, no doubt conformed to the taste of those who desired to have their

convents and churches enriched by his genius, and like all other great masters, could not always follow his own desire of representing the great and beautiful, and may have occasionally followed the mere nature too closely, which he knew in his own clime; but he is always a wondrous artist, and his pictures have the merit, in general, of being pleasing to look on, as well as holding an exalted place as works of art: this is not altogether the case in the present instance, for several of his subjects are as fearful as those of his brother painters. The most remarkable, is a picture of St. Bonaventure, whose terrific legend he has recorded with a fidelity truly appalling. The saint was occupied, at the time of his death, in the composition of a work on which depended his eternal salvation, according to his own belief. Even in the grave his spirit could find no repose, for the unfinished task kept his soul from bliss.

The painter has shown his dimly-lighted cell, the stone table, and the writing-materials which he used in the pursuit of his destined toil; and before that table, and holding that pen in his bony fingers, sits an unearthly form, to which the damps of the grave yet seem to cling, on

which the hand of corruption had already been laid — there sits the spectre monk, meditating and inditing as he was wont to do in life. His eyes have a lurid lustre, like "lamps in sepulchres;" his cheeks are sunk and livid, his lips are black and bloodless, and between their fearful opening, one almost imagines a dark abyss of death may be seen; his skull is that of a skeleton not yet divested of the outward covering which veils the awful aspect it would otherwise assume. There is a halo of pale meteor light round the head, which shines out through the dark profound that encircles the figure; the drapery hangs in broad folds over the thin body, the feet have the same deadly hue as the ghastly hands, and the whole attitude has a stillness and absorbing devotion about it which chains the beholder, and rivets the gaze, which would fain turn away from the hideous fascination that enthrals it.

Altogether St. Bonaventure is the most horrible picture that can be conceived; it is "the likeness of that so foul to behold," that a wizard's tower or an inquisitor's cell were the only proper receptacle for such a piece of barbarous superstitious fable, told in a manner to unnerve the

stoutest heart and make the judicious amateur deplore the perversion of so splendid a genius, while a feeling of disgust comes over the mind for a belief which it was necessary to secure by means of terror and falsehood, contrary to every precept of true religion.

As a relief to this catalogue of horrors the eye turns to a series of extraordinary pictures of every-day life, by an artist who is the Watteau of Spain, except in his grace. Ladies and cavaliers are represented in all the extravagance of fashionable Spanish costume at no very recent period: the ladies are mounted on stilted shoes a foot high; their bodies are drawn into all the contortions of ultra-fashion; the head-dresses, flounces, fans, and ornaments are most extraordinary, and the pictures are consequently curious as a faithful delineation of costume; besides this they possess little merit. Many in the collection appear to me to have been *restored*, and that somewhat clumsily, the carnations being unnaturally brilliant considering their age.

On the whole I can scarcely agree in thinking that any great acquisition has been made to France by this crowd of bleeding St. Sebastians writhing against a stake pierced with a hundred

arrows,—saints and martyrs undergoing the tortures of the rack, flaying, broiling, being crucified with the head downwards, or cloven with an axe, —half naked, dirty monks in stone cells and caves, bleeding from recent discipline, haggard from fasting, and exhibiting the features of demons or madmen; and the greatest part of these scenes, hard, harsh, faded, and ill-executed.

The hotel at which we were staying, at Paris, was in the Rue Louis le Grand, now almost rebuilt from what it was since the days when we saw all its pavement taken up to form barricades at the corners of the different streets which lead into it. A friend of ours, who called to see us there, amused us with the relation of an adventure which, he asserted, had happened to him on this spot, though he refused to indicate the exact house in which it occurred. I give it in his own words, but do not venture to vouch for its entire truth from any similar experience on my own part, for we found our hotel extremely quiet, and were never disturbed by any supernatural, or other noises or apparitions, beyond that of the civil waiter and chambermaid, both the most silent persons it had been our lot to meet with in France.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE HOTEL OF MADAME DU BARRI.

" Lass dass nur stehen ! Dabey wirds Niemand wohl.
Es ist ein Zauberbild, ist leblos, ein Idol.
Ihm zu begegnen ist nicht gut."—*Faust von Göthe.*

"In one of the streets of Paris, which, from its designation, shows that it was built during the reign of the 'Grand Monarque,' it was my fortune once to take up my abode. The hotel in which I resided was a large one, with various suites of apartments, in most of which the faded magnificence of the furniture and decorations gave sufficient evidence of the glories of the past.

"It may be supposed that it was not without reason the proprietor of the hotel boasted of its former grandeur, when it is known that tradition assigned it as the dwelling of Madame du Barri during the plenitude of her power. It was here, perhaps, that she celebrated those agreeable suppers which the king was accustomed to attend; here were assembled the various and

opposing aspirants for power, who so obsequiously paid her their court; and it was even here that, in her unguarded moments, she bestowed those favours on her untitled lover, which accident so nearly revealed to her royal friend.

"Though the characters of Madame du Barri, Louis XV, and nearly all the court, are as bad as licentiousness could make them, there is still a lingering feeling of regard for that which is antique and magnificent, although a claim upon our respect no longer exists; and, at the least, the powerful situation in which she was placed, and the generous faults which marked her character, independently of the recollection of her melancholy end, are motives sufficient to attach an interest to the place where she resided. At any rate, such was my feeling; and, when I first took possession of my apartment, my thoughts were fully impressed with the by-gone dreams of splendour and intrigue which these walls and their tenants had once been witness to.

"It was late in the month of December when I first became a sojourner in this abode. The gloom of the season, and the loneliness of my situation, contributed their share to the state of

mind which influenced me. Though established in the gayest city in the universe, my own prospects were anything but cheering; the present was overcast; the future, doubtful; my friends were remote, and the winter opened before me with its dark days and long companionless evenings. My only resources lay in study; and, fortunately, the means of accomplishing the desire are, in this capital, at the command of all who seek them. I had always felt an ardent thirst for reading; it was the highest gratification I could experience. Books were to me the *summum bonum* of existence.

"It was not so much the pursuit of science, the acquisition of learning, which impelled me; it was, rather, a deep and mysterious pleasure which I felt in communing in secret with those authors whose names, or the records which they gave, carried me back to the remoter periods of history; when knowledge was in its infancy, and was deeply tinctured with imagination and superstition. The wonderful narratives of the early travellers, the first speculations of the discoverers of science, and the opinions of men on their promulgation; the traditional accounts so implicitly believed and so faithfully recorded, and the

tone of romance which was imparted to every object hallowed by the lapse of ages; all combined to charm and interest me, and enabled me to support the solitude in which I dwelt with some degree of endurance.

"During the day I saw enough of the world and external objects. The morning I devoted to those splendid libraries, which are at once the glory of Paris and the envy of other nations. Amidst the endless collections spread out before me, accessible to all, I revelled in the enjoyment of my favourite studies. When the hour came which dispersed the crowd of students, I usually resorted to some public exhibition of art; most frequently to the Louvre; where, in the gorgeous gallery of paintings, or the still halls of sculpture, I wandered along, fancy free, combining the objects I saw with the visions flitting through my mind, and enjoying the fullest flights of imagination. From hence into the world; the gay, busy, bustling throng of Paris! the Boulevard, with its motley groups; the Palais Royal, with its numberless attractions; or the Tuileries, with its host of fashion, on the promenade, or among the critical and observant loungers who throng the shady walks.

"While the daylight lasted I had as much command of Paris as the richest idler, or the possessor of a *thousand* friends (admitting such an improbability). But the days in this gay city are not of longer duration than in our own gloomy capital; and, when the shades of night approached, I was thrown upon my own resources. It was then that I returned with 'lingering steps and slow' towards my old hotel; where, seated beside the blazing wood fire, my bachelor's fare soon discussed,—a few choice books, 'such as my soul loved,' beside me, I once more forgot the existing world in favour of the past, and abandoned myself to the reveries which my situation and course of reading were wont to produce.

"Perhaps a description of my apartment may not be amiss. Imagine a lofty saloon, of capacious dimensions, with three high windows on one side, overlooking a square court; though large, the windows admit but little light, being shrouded by thick curtains, and draperies of yellow cloth with a deep black border, to match with a *canapé*, a *fauteuil*, and numerous high, old-fashioned chairs, of yellow velvet. A tall *secretaire*, with secret drawers innumerable, stands

in a recess at one extremity; between the windows are two *consoles* of marble, with richly-gilt frames, ornamented with Arabesque work; but the gilding somewhat smirched. Three long glasses, let into the panels of the wainscot, occupy different sides of the *salon;* a gleam of faded gilding runs round the moulding of the walls, gives a faint tinge to the figures above the fireplace, and vanishes at the doorway. It may be conceived, how well these gaieties accord with the cold tiled *parquet,* which forms the floor of the apartment, long guiltless of a carpet, but polished *à l'outrance,* and slippery as the bridge of Al Sirât. A bedroom, of nearly equal dimensions corresponds with the *salon,* and is redolent in an equal degree, of dim velvet, faded brocade, ancient *commode,* and time-worn *canapé* and chairs.

"The least imaginative tenant of such an abode must recall the days of Louis Quatorze, and of his reprobate 'petit fils;' judge, then, what *I* felt in surveying my chamber, with the full recollection of all that did occur elsewhere, and might have happened here.

"In a short time I became quite reconciled to my Carthusian solitude; my books, my apartment, my thoughts, all harmonized together; a

degree of romance appeared to tinge the hours of my seclusion, and time wore on. One night when, after the usual routine, I had retired to rest, and was preparing to address myself to sleep, I heard a quick harsh sound, apparently close beside me. I started up, thinking something had fallen, or that some animal had intruded into the chamber, and, throwing back the bed-curtains, I watched attentively to see if I could discover anything, yet nothing stirred; but while in this attitude of attention I distinctly heard the same grating sound repeated; and my senses being now more acute, and my mind prepared for its repetition, I recognised, this time, the peculiar sound of a curtain quickly drawn. This surprised me; for, from whence could it proceed? I was not aware of any lodgers occupying the adjoining suite of apartments; indeed, I had been given to understand that they were in a very dirty dilapidated state. I continued to listen, in hopes of hearing the sound once more, but was compelled to lay my head on my pillow with the wish ungratified. I pondered for a short time on the subject, and had just arrived at the conclusion, that those mysterious noise-makers, the rats, were the authors of the disturbance,

when I fell asleep. Next day, as soon as I had breakfasted, and was proceeding on my usual expedition across the river to the Mazarin Library, I stopped for a moment at the porter's lodge to inquire of old Petronelle, the portress, if any recent arrival had tenanted the apartment in my vicinity.

"'Ah mon Dieu—non, Monsieur! il n'y a personne qui est venue; and, besides,' added she, 'if any one were to come, Monsieur le Propriétaire could not let that apartment.'

"'Why not?' said I.

"'Oh, because it's too much out of order; the rooms are filled at present with old furniture, and want repairs: next month, please God, ça sera bien arrangé et superbement garni pour le Printemps.'

"'It's very odd,' replied I, 'for I declare I thought I had heard some one there last night; but, as nobody lives there, I suppose it must have been the rats.'

"'Ah, oui, Monsieur—sans doute c'étaient les rats—il n'y a pas de mal tandis qu'ils restent à la maison!'

"*I* thought differently; however, I said no more, and set off on my walk.

"I now thought no more of the circumstance till bed-time arrived again, and then only to say to myself as I extinguished my light, 'I wonder if I shall hear it again!' My wonder did not last long; again I heard the curtains drawn to and fro. They were not those of my own window; besides, the sound came from a different quarter, and I felt sure that it proceeded from the adjoining apartment. I got up; and, walking across the room and leaning against the wainscot, I listened to hear if any other sound stirred within: but all was silent as the grave. I went to the window and looked across the court-yard;—all was gray and cold. While I stood there I heard the chimes of midnight from a neighbouring church, and shivering with cold, though full of curiosity, I returned to my bed and resumed the comfortable position from which I had been roused. I now indulged in a host of speculations. I abandoned the rats, and began secretly to hope that some less natural cause was at work. The house was old, and many strange scenes had, no doubt, once been enacted in it. I trusted that some mystery was concealed, and fervently prayed that the enjoyment of it might be left me undisturbed.

"That no interruption might arise from the interference of the household, I forbore to speak again of the circumstance; and, when questioned by Madame Petronelle, I laughed and shook my head. I had now another object added to the dreamy pursuits of my existence, and this of a nature well calculated to add to the excitement which my studies had fostered. What I precisely expected I knew not; but in this uncertainty lay the chiefest charm. If I had no friendly face to welcome me on my return home, I had a nocturnal expectation to supply the hiatus; and, as regularly as the night came, and about the same hour, I invariably heard the same undoubted noise of the curtains. Once or twice I exclaimed aloud when I heard it, to ascertain if my voice would cause any additional noise, but nothing seemed to disturb the regular uniformity of the sound, and I therefore now waited for it in silent expectation.

"A fortnight, perhaps, had elapsed in this manner, when one stormy night in February (the 13th, as I remember from a subsequent occurrence), I had gone to bed earlier than usual, being rather tired after a long excursion into a very remote part of the city. The wind howled

mournfully in the hollow area of the court; the clouds drifted fitfully across the face of heaven; and, by transient gleams, the moon was occasionally visible. Though tired in body, I did not feel unusually sleepy; and, placing my light on a small table beside the bed, I continued to read the book which had been the object of my afternoon's excursion. It was a voluminous work, purporting to be a secret history of the courts of many succeeding monarchs, from the reign of Henry III. to that of Louis XV.

"As I wandered from one period to another, now selecting an anecdote from the faction of the *Ligue,* anon a detail of the court intrigues of Richelieu or Mazarin; a fragment from the Wars of the Fronde; a battle, or a scene at Versailles, from the Reign of the Grand Monarque; a drunken revel of the regent Philip, and his vile associate and minister Dubois; or one of the many tales of frailty connected with the Parc aux Cerfs, my mind began to sympathise with the weariness of my limbs, and amid this chaos of recollections the page danced before my eyes, and I sank back on my pillow to rest there for a moment before I finally closed the book. I suppose I must immediately have fallen asleep,

and this without the nightly accompaniment—'evermore the prologue to my slumber.'

"How long I slept I know not; but, while I did so, my dreams were painful and troubled. I was tired—my mind was confused with a multiplicity of images—the heavy book weighed upon my chest like lead, and all combined to give me a fit of the nightmare. It seemed to me as if an antiquated, meagre female figure, were beside me, striving to repress the struggles which I made to free myself from her grasp; this was the principal feature, but a thousand indistinct objects mingled with it. A fortunate movement of my body at length removed the book from its position, and I awoke with outstretched arms, striving against the air.

"The moon, for the moment, shed her light across the room—my candle was extinguished, and as I turned my head towards the place where it stood, it seemed as if a part of my dream were actually realized. On the other side of the little table, which I have mentioned, stood a large high-backed chair, lined with green velvet, a relic of former days. Here I usually deposited my clothes, but their place seemed now supplied by an upright figure quietly seated upon them.

I gazed in astonishment, and rubbed my eyes, to be certain that they were not deceiving me; but no—the more I gazed, the clearer became the outline, the more certain the definiteness of the figure. It was a female, and the moon's rays striking full upon her, I could discern a set of pale, worn features marked by age; but even in this uncertain light, bearing traces of beauty. Her large eyes shone brightly, and were steadily fixed upon my own, as motionless and silent I gazed upon her. At length my voice found utterance, and I hurriedly demanded, 'Who, and what are you?—what brings you here?'

"Her lips parted, and every tone as she spoke vibrated through my frame with a sudden thrill. 'I am one whom you have wished to see. I bring intelligence such as you have long desired to know.—Arise, and follow me!'

"While she spoke, her figure imperceptibly changed its position, and I saw her at the further extremity of the room. Without pausing to reflect, I obeyed the impulse which urged me—and hastily enveloping myself in a *robe-de-chambre*, I followed the movements of the figure. I had arrived within arm's length of her, when I paused. 'Whither do you conduct me?' said I; 'there is no exit here,—the door is opposite.'

"'This dwelling is well known to me,' she answered; 'have *you* ever passed this way before?'

"So saying she seemed to press against the wainscot, and immediately a narrow doorway was apparent. 'Follow me,' she repeated; and I passed through the aperture. I found myself in a bed-room of dimensions considerably larger than the one I occupied myself. A single *veilleuse* was burning, and shed a faint ray through the chamber. My companion cast a significant glance at the bed, as though it contained some one who might not be disturbed, and we crossed to the other side of the room. She opened a door, and we passed through an antechamber; another door was opened, and my eyes were dazzled with a full blaze of light from numerous chandeliers suspended above a festive board, round which were assembled about a dozen guests, all engaged in doing honour to the occasion of their meeting. The apartment was magnificently furnished, and every article of luxury was there—such at least was my impression on the sudden *coup d'œil* which greeted me. My conductress paused, though our entrance seemed to have attracted no attention from the *convives*.

"I had now time to scan my companion's appearance more minutely. She was tall, and elegantly made; her features were fine, but strongly marked; and, but for the rigidity of outline, and the sharp lines in her face and throat, indicative of age, she would still have been pronounced beautiful. That she had been so was evident. Her costume was magnificent, but antiquated. Her dress was of green satin, spangled with gold, and ornamented by a garland of roses, fastened by knots of pearls, with a deep flounce of rich Flanders lace. On her head she wore a garland of roses, with green and gold leaves alternately, bound on by a cordon of small pearls. Across her forehead was also a string of pearls, supporting, in the centre, a magnificent star of blazing diamonds. Splendid pendants adorned her ears, and her whole *parure* was superb. It was strange this extraordinary degree of finery on one so attenuated and wan; but the whole scene was equally so, and the sensation of astonishment was among the slightest of my perceptions. Curiosity and expectancy were the motives which principally influenced me. Who, thought I for a moment, is my companion?—and who are all these guests?

—and more than all, what are they doing here? But I had little time for reflection; my conductress motioned me to advance with her, and walked toward the head of the table. As we approached the group, I perceived that all the company were dressed with the same degree of elegance, though the fashion was somewhat *passé*. The society was mixed, — there were ladies as well as gentlemen. At the upper end of the table were two vacant seats; beside one of them sat a very elderly gentleman, decked in the extremity of a mode fashionable a century ago. As we advanced, he rose, and making a most inimitable bow, he waved his hand with a theatrical gesture, while looking toward my companion, he exclaimed,

> 'Chacun doutait en vous voyant si belle
> Si vous étiez femme ou déité,
> Mais c'est trop sûr; votre rare beauté
> N'est pas l'effet d'une simple mortelle!'

"'Chère Comtesse,' he added, 'we have been *au désespoir* at your absence;—le baron, ne vient-il pas?'

"'Non, Monsieur le Duc,' answered the lady thus addressed; 'et vous le savez comme moi! but here I have the honour to produce a sub-

stitute;' and she presented *me*, her passive follower, to the company, who all rose, saluted me with great solemnity, and then resumed their places and the conversation which this introduction had interrupted.

"I glanced my eyes rapidly along the table, to take note of the appearance of each individual.

"'Connaissez-vous les hôtes?' inquired 'la comtesse' (as I must call her, *par excellence.)*

"'Not one,' replied I; 'and yet some of their features are in a degree familiar to me: but one thing strikes me,—a forced expression of gaiety seems to pervade every countenance, except *that one*,' I added, indicating by a look, an old gentleman with a sardonic mouth, and sarcastic grey eyes.

"'Ah! pour celui-là vous avez bien raison,—autant que pour les autres, I will tell you who they all are. He, towards whom you glanced this moment, is named the Duc d'Ayen; spiteful, slanderous, and witty, were he alone in the world, he would speak ill of himself, il aime tant à médire. He is only sorry for misfortune when he fails to witness it, and never rejoices in the prosperity of any one, except it

is built on the ruin of another. He who sits next to him, and whose natural dulness is the whetstone of his present sarcasm, is the Duc de Duras, a philosopher, as profound as the countryman of Horace. "Il attend jusqu'à la rivière soit passée;" poor man, the current of his imagination is at the lowest ebb. That lady who sits opposite, coquetting with a gentleman in a rich military dress, who looks as if she never lost an opportunity of realizing some good, of gaining some advantage, or deriving some benefit for herself, is Madame la Maréchale de Mirepoix,—her present admirer, is the Prince de Soubise, *un guerrier fameux*, not for victory, but defeat,—demandez au Roi de Prusse. Next to him, is the hypocritical Duc de la Vauguyon, "jésuite jusque par dessus les oreilles." That lady in the dress of *satin cramoisé*, with a brilliant *agraffe* of diamonds, is the Duchesse d'Aiguillon; her husband, the duke, is on this side, conversing with that mild, agreeable-looking man, who listens so patiently, yet shrewdly, to the specious arguments of his companion: the latter is the Marquis de Chauvelin. *There* is the Duc de Cossé-Brissac—yonder the Comte d'Escars;—and that noisy, intemperate fellow at the bottom

of the table, each of whose hands is stretched towards what he most covets—wine and women —whose every third word is an oath, and every jest an indecency, that is *le Comte Jean,* as he is generally called.'

"I had had no time to interrupt this description so fluently given. Here, luckily, she stopped, and I took the opportunity of saying, 'Your remarks are most interesting, but you have omitted the principal personage; still I think I can divine who she is, if, as I believe, I am among the *élite* of the court of Louis XV.'

"'Quant à cela, monsieur, vous avez raison; mais dîtes-moi,—who am I, and who is this gentleman on my right hand?'

"'I will reserve the greatest pleasure for the last: the gentleman I imagine to be the Duc de Richelieu—"un vieux papillon"——'

"'Taisez-vous,' interrupted la Comtesse, 'that quotation must be made aside.'

"'I should be happy if I could anywhere find words to say all I think of the ornament of the court, the accomplished *Madame du Barri.*'

"'Je vois bien que, Monsieur, n'est pas ami de Milord Stair.'

"'Mais, madame,' said I, 'I see all here whom

I might have expected, save one; why, when all others are assembled, is the king absent?'

"'Do you not know,' replied the Countess, 'that he is ill? Are you ignorant of the fatal malady which wastes him away? Did you not observe the bed in the room through which we passed? There he lies, and none go near him save myself.'

"'How comes it, then,' said I, 'that all his friends are enjoying the banquet here, if his situation be so precarious?' (For my mind was fully impressed with the reality of what I saw.)

"'Enjoyment!' exclaimed Madame du Barri; 'observe them well for a moment, and you will correct your opinion.'

"I obeyed her direction, and once more turned my attention towards the guests. It seemed as if, during the lapse of a few minutes, a great change had occurred in each individual of the company. That mirth, which even then appeared to sit uneasily upon them, had now the character of convulsion; their eyes seemed to sparkle with a lurid gleam, an unnatural flush overspread their features, and the entire expression of their countenances was distorted. Yet still they pursued the theme of their conver-

sation, of love, politics, or war: the argumentative grew fiercer—the passionate more vehement.

"I turned towards the Countess—'Tell me,' I demanded, 'the meaning of this scene! I see before me people who have long since been numbered with the dead—you have yourself recorded the deaths of some, yet here I see them before me, endued with human passions, and acting as though they were still living.'

"'You heretics,' she answered, 'believe in nothing, or I might tell you that there is a life between mortality and eternity: if you wish for another, and a stronger proof, retire with me to the chamber which I named, and judge for yourself.'

"She rose as she spoke; none save the old Duc de Richelieu attempted to assist her in doing so, or did honour to her departure, (and his politeness involved him in an epigram from the Duc d'Ayen,) and we retired as quietly as we entered. As we quitted the *salon*, the conversation seemed to die away, and as I cast a backward glance, all seemed motionless and silent as the inhabitants of that eastern city of tombs, where all is converted into stone.

"When we entered the sick chamber, for such I now found it to be, Madame du Barri went towards the bed, and quickly *withdrew the curtains*, and my ear immediately recognised the accustomed sound. Before me lay an invalid, stretched in the helplessness of overwhelming disease. He was awake, but in his eyes alone dwelt the consciousness of vitality; his tongue was silent, and his features impassive, except when a convulsive motion of the mouth betrayed some inward pang. Though disfigured by the disease which preyed upon him, there was that mark of the Bourbon in his features, which, independent of the circumstances, would have enabled me to recognise in the sick man no other than Louis XV.

"'How long has he been thus?' I asked.

"'He is always so,' answered Madame du Barri; 'his disease is fixed at this point—hopeless suffering and incurable pain. The time may come to free him and all of us, but long years must intervene.'

"'Am I to believe, then, that your present state is what is called purgatory?'

"'It is so.'

"'How comes it, then, that your situation is

so dissimilar to that of the king? He lies here in torment, and his boon companions are revelling in the renewal of the scenes of their past life.'

"'It is only a variety of punishment, there is no reality in their apparent merriment; in the midst of our gaiety we are pursued by the bitterest recollections; the most fatal moments of our past lives are ever before us; the *guillotine* and all its attendant horrors are to me a second self; and this perpetual death-bed is continually before me.—With all those whom you have just seen the case is the same, but modified in its relation to each individual.'

"'Are you always here, then?'

"'No, we roam from place to place, changing the scene, but never the circumstances; at Versailles, at Fontainebleau, in Paris, or wherever we may be, the same occurrences exist. But on the approach of any remarkable event, we are invariably here, and particularly if it has reference to any of the descendants of St. Louis.'

"'You tell me extraordinary things,' said I; 'what proof have I that all which passes before me is not delusion? It certainly impresses itself on my senses, but how do I know that it possesses any reality?'

"'Observe him who lies on that couch—listen to his words—he is about to speak.'

"I gazed upon the king; his countenance for a moment resumed the expression of intelligence; he attempted to raise himself in the bed, and, turning his head towards my companion, he muttered, 'Ah, Madame du Barri, nous sommes bien malheureux; encore un coup de fer; ma race sera bientôt éteinte!' With these words, he sank on the bed.

"'What does this mean?' I demanded: 'to what event does he allude?'

"'You will know to-morrow,' she answered, 'and *then* you will remember our interview.'

"As she spoke, she raised her hand, *and drew the curtains close.* The light disappeared from the chamber, and with it I lost all consciousness of my situation; a sudden torpor came over me, and what further befel I knew not. When the morning came, I found myself in my own room, lying upon the bed—my dressing-gown was in the chair beside it. It was yet early when I heard a loud rap at the door, and the shrill voice of Petronelle, exclaiming, '*Lévez-vous, lévez-vous, Monsieur, une revolution a éclatée. Le Duc de Berri est assassiné!*'

"It was true: the previous night, at the Opera, Louvel's knife had avenged his private wrongs."

Rouen is too well known to most English travellers to need description. Not having visited the town for some years, we were much struck with the improvements we found everywhere, though they are, perhaps, more in course of execution at the present moment than completed. Certain it is that no city of France required, and still demands, more changes, for nothing can exceed the dirty, slovenly, dark, ill-paved state of the streets. The magnificent churches stand in general in positions, which, from the surrounding disagreeables, disgust and frighten the visitor; and should one chance to diverge into a back street the force of horror can no farther go!

Rouen may be justly pronounced the filthiest and at the same time one of the most interesting towns in France. Its situation is magnificent; its quays are fine, its river grand, its bridges handsome, and the scenery round it surpassingly beautiful. Such a town in England, placed as it is with so many advantages, both for commerce and improvement, being on such a river and on the high road to the capital, would have long

since been made one of the finest cities in the country; another Bath would have arisen on the ruins of the antique town, and the glorious cathedral and abbey church been undisgraced by their neighbourhood.

Whoever goes twice to Rouen will find that his first impression on entering the two splendid churches will be a preference given, in the first instance to St. Ouen, in the second to the cathedral; perhaps if he remain long he will end in being unable to select his favourite, including St. Maclou in his admiration.

Dazzled with the splendour of the painted window, whose long ranges of coloured light illumine the majestic aisles, the length and height of which amaze the beholder, we advanced to the chapel of the Virgin, anxious to lose no time in seeing the newly discovered statue of Cœur de Lion, which is there exposed to public view, waiting the time when a suitable tomb shall be prepared whereon it may repose. It was in July 1838 that, on occasion of some researches directed by M. Deville, this valuable archeological discovery was made.

Beneath the pavement of the sanctuary, on the left side of the altar, not far from the place

where the inscription has been placed, about two feet below the surface was found the precious statue, together with the box containing the heart of the Lion King. The statue is, like that at Fontevraud, six feet and a half (French) in length, and though somewhat inferior in execution to that with which we had been so delighted, is still an admirable specimen of art. The features are scarcely so well preserved, but there is the same noble character of head, expansive chest and commanding form; the draperies are extremely well expressed, and the statue is most interesting in all its details. The tomb which it decorated was formerly surrounded by a trellis of silver, which was sold in the thirteenth century to help to pay the ransom of that pious monarch, who sacrificed his subjects to a misplaced zeal, St. Louis.

In the same chapel is the fine antique tomb of the Grand Seneschal of Anjou, Poitou, and Normandy, Pierre de Brézé, Count de Maulevrier, who was killed at the battle of Montlhéry, in 1465. There is neither inscription nor statue, though formerly the effigies of the seneschal and his lady, Jeanne de Bec-Crespin, adorned the tomb, which is seventeen feet high, while the

points of the two pilasters which crown it, rise two or three feet higher still, and give this graceful and beautiful erection additional dignity.

Beside this monument, is that of another of the same family, Louis de Brézé, who died 1531, and is remarkable for having been the husband of the famous Diana of Poictiers, of whom we had seen so many records on our journey, and to whose *pious care* is owing the erection of this tomb, where she herself figures in the character of a disconsolate widow, kneeling at the head of her dead husband, her arms crossed and her head bent down in all the "mockery of woe" imaginable. There is no beauty either in the face or form of this statue, which can therefore scarcely be a likeness; the Virgin Mother, in the niche opposite, at the foot, is very lovely, and, one would much rather suppose, like the celebrated beauty who could subdue not only the hearts of kings but the jealousy of queens.

The tomb is covered with inscriptions, of which the most *singularly impudent*, is the following in Latin:

"Oh! Louis de Brézé, Diana of Poictiers, inconsolable for the loss of her husband, has raised this monument to thee! She was thy

inseparable companion, thy wife ever faithful to her nuptial vows: she will be equally faithful to thee in the tomb."

The Duchesse de Valentinois no doubt kept her word, and was *equally* true in both cases; she spared neither alabaster nor black marble, neither devices nor ornaments, neither garlands nor trophies, to dignify the monument of him she so deeply regretted: he lies recumbent beneath, he bestrides his war-horse above. Love, Glory, Victory, Prudence, Justice, and Faith, are pressed into the service; and the magnificent sorrow of the bereaved wife is made manifest to all unbelievers! one is divided between admiration of her *peculiar* conjugal tenderness, and the genius of the artist who executed her design, said to be either Jean Cousin, or Goujon.

Another, and even more exquisite monument, is that of the Cardinals d'Amboise, placed in the thickness of the wall: it was finished in 1525, and is a fine specimen of art at that period. The two Cardinals, uncle and nephew, are represented kneeling on cushions, their heads uncovered, and their hands joined in prayer. The expression is admirable, and the six charming little figures, placed in niches below, of *the Vir-*

tues, cannot be surpassed for grace and delicacy; the statues are all of white, the tomb of black marble. The twelve apostles also appear in their separate niches, divided by pilasters of exquisite workmanship. A bas-relief represents St. George overcoming the Dragon, with other saints, among whom the famous St. Romain, Archbishop of Rouen in the seventh century, figures; he who vanquished a hideous demon in the form of a dragon, called La Gargouille, who ravaged the country in his time: the story of which miracle is represented at full in another part of the cathedral on the painted glass, and wherever it could be placed to give celebrity to the achievement.

There are other tombs in Rouen Cathedral, but less curious, and less known. The exterior is undergoing repair; and though the iron pyramid, which replaces the antique one executed by Robert Becquet in 1544, is usually considered a chef-d'œuvre of modern art, I confess it does not appear to me to harmonize with the rest of the building. Perhaps one ought not to judge positively until the whole of the repairs are finished, as the principal façade appears at this moment greatly disfigured by scaffolding, and the general effect is spoilt.

St. Ouen, with its perfection of proportion, its magnificent windows; its light, reedy pillars, of amazing height; its delicacy and grace, makes you, on entering, forget at once the superior solidity and solemnity of its rival, and you go from one to the other, unable to decide on the superiority of either, but convinced that these two splendid churches are the finest, on the whole, to be found in Normandy.

The *Fille Aînée de M^gr. l'Archevèque*, St. Maclou, is full of interest and beauty; the sculptured staircase, which leads to the organ, is particularly remarkable, and is a perfect *bijou* in its kind; the painted glass is also exceedingly fine, and the ornamented doors are in the highest style of art.

Among the numerous churches in Rouen is that of St. Godard, which still preserves some of its magnificent glass, from the richness of the colours of which came the proverb alluding to the purple hue of wine, "Il est de la couleur des vitres de St. Godard."

To another church, that of St. Eloi, the natives of Rouen, who seem particularly fond of proverbs, are indebted for another. There existed in the choir a well, the water of which was drawn up

by means of an iron chain, from whence—" Il est froid comme la corde du puits de St. Eloi."

There is no city in France which has the remains of so many churches and monasteries as Rouen,—it would be a fatigue to count them, to find them all is next to impossible; but those suppressed are fast disappearing amongst the daily alterations and improvements; nor has one the heart to regret this, observing the squalid dirt which usually surrounds their remains.

The beautiful Palais de Justice, and the Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde, are always to be visited; and are examined with increasing interest on every new inspection; but they are well known, and numerous excellent plates are published representing them in all their details. Nor is there any dearth of information respecting this important town, in which, perhaps, is to be seen more antiquity than in any other in France; and which, were it not more impracticably dirty than any other, would afford endless delight to the amateur antiquary.

The statue of the heroine of Orleans is not more successful here than anywhere else; and until a fine copy of the exquisite work of the regretted Princess Marie is placed in one of the

towns consecrated to the memory of the unfortunate Joan, no worthy representation of her is likely to adorn them.

The scenery round Rouen is of the most beautiful description: the tower, with its numerous spires, the fine flowing river, the mountains, vales, and woods, give it altogether features of beauty and grandeur seldom to be met with. There is no end to the delightful walks (some rather precipitous, it is true,) to be found during a protracted stay in this place, which, in spite of its disadvantages, is lively and agreeable; and which in a few years, when the slow progress of its building permits, may vie with any town in France as a pleasant residence.

We left Rouen for Havre, taking, in our way, the town of Caudebec, which we were anxious to see. The whole route is charming, varied, and interesting, and the *points de vues* from the high hills along the river, are surpassingly beautiful: at Duclair the river is particularly fine and picturesque. At a short distance, is the Abbey of Jumiéges, famous in history, and celebrated as the place where the heart of Agnes Sorel was deposited: some late discoveries have restored part of the stone which formed her tomb,

but all that remains of the inscription are these words:

"..... Dame de Breauté, de Roqueferrière, d'Issoudun et de Vernon sur Saine: piteuse entre toutes gens, et qui largement donnoit de ses deniers aux églises et aux pauvres, laquelle trépassa....."

The stone on which is this inscription, had been for a long time employed to form part of a balcony of a house in Rouen.

The ruin has a fine effect in the distance, but it has, as usual, been converted into a manufactory.

La Mailleraye is a fine domain which we passed on the way: its gardens, and park, and woods, appear grand and extensive. Saint Wandrille, situated in a charming valley, now offers but a few walls of its ancient abbey, once so famous. Nothing can be prettier than the country round, and few towns are approached by a more beautiful road than Caudebec.

This charming little town is situated at the [illegible] of a double mountain, in the midst of [illegible] the deep windings of the Seine: the [illegible]er of St. Gertrude here meets the great [illegible], and throws itself into its bosom, occasioning a commotion in the waters, which, at

certain periods, produces a phenomenon which is an object of much curiosity, called *la barre*, similar to the contention of the streams at the port below Avranches.

The forest of Brotonne crowns the fine perspective of hills, of which a chain covered with verdure extends for some distance beyond this pretty *port*, for such it once was, of some importance, at the period when William the Conqueror passed through it on his victorious way, when roused from his bed by the news of revolt;

Sun bon cheval a demandé:
Or verrai, dist il, ki vendra,
Et or verrai ki mi swivra.
* * * *
Baieues passa e puiz Caen:
Semblant fist d'aler à Roem.
Quant il vint al Punt Audumer,
A Chaudebec ala passer,
De Chaudebec as Bans-le-Cumte.

Roman de Rou.

But the wealth of Caudebec is its lovely church, of which Henri IV. said, "this is the most beautiful chapel I ever beheld." It is certainly perfect for delicacy and exquisite taste, and with high tower, one hundred and sixty-five feet from the ground, has some resemblance

to that of Strasbourg. This tower is an object of great beauty from the distant hills, and equally so on a near inspection. Some of the chapels are very fine; one in particular, dedicated to the Virgin, the pendant roof of which is exquisite. Much of the coloured glass is preserved, and there are two baptismal fonts, very antique and curious.

In the interior of the small, insignificant town which has now but little commerce, though once famous for a manufacture of gloves, greatly esteemed, and hats called "Caudebecs," there are some delightful *bits* for an artist: as in all other places, these are disappearing, and probably, in a few years, there will be few striped and projecting houses to be found. The people readily assisted us, as we took our station to sketch some of these, by bringing out chairs for our accommodation, but the crowds of curious amateurs who gathered round us, rendered a protracted stay in the retreat we had chosen, between two walls, impossible. There is scarcely a vestige of the castle, upon the ruins of which small houses are now built. The ancient *fossé* has long since been filled up, and the quay and boulevards conceal the former defences.

Our hotel, where everything was remarkably bad, except the beds, was the dearest we had met with in France, which surprised us, as the place is so retired, and so little visited; we regretted having chosen it for its situation opposite the river, instead of an antique, wild-looking *hôtel des postes*, which, less presuming in appearance, would, probably, have turned out much better.

Lillebonne, the next town we reached, was a favourite residence of William the Conqueror, particularly while he was hatching the *mischief* of the battle of Hastings; and, to judge by the extensive Roman remains, not long since discovered, it was a place much delighted in by earlier conquerors. Mosaic pavements, bronze statues, medals, and other curiosities, are constantly being met with; and the sites of houses and baths appear on the road as you pass, along the river Bolbec, and in the low meadows. Swords, cups of glass, and sculptured stones, are frequently dug up, and walls are traced on the hills, at the base of one of which is now developed a nearly perfect theatre, an object of great curiosity and interest to classical antiquaries.

There are a great many marshes round Lillebonne, and from them are dug quantities of peat, which we observed piled up at the sides of the road; the country is verdant and pretty, but begins to lose its former charm. Bolbec is an ugly place, filled with manufactories for dyeing, as the black streams which run through every part of the town indicate. From thence to le Havre, there is nothing particularly attractive, and every indication was now given by the weather that our *summer* was over. We remained a day at this bustling port, which is lively and amusing, having very good shops, excellent inns, a handsome high-street, and many advantages; but is, as usual in all French towns, even the best, sufficiently slovenly, and unbearably dirty in wet weather.

Our passage, on our return to Southampton, was a remarkable contrast to that we were favoured with when we first arrived some months before, and we gladly welcomed the pretty port of Southampton, whose sparkling waters were enlivened by a brilliant sun, as if purposely that we might draw a comparison for the best between it and the dingy waves we had left behind in fog and rain. The country from Southampton to

London over the Hog's Back is so beaut. that, as we passed through the cultivated plains, by the parks and meadows, along a charming road, with a speed which seemed to us almost incredible, though, this time, we did not travel by railroad, and caught here and there glimpses of fine Norman towers, and beheld magnificent prospects, we felt that we had not quitted all beauty on our return from wandering amongst the Bocages and the Vines.

THE END.

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